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Philosophy and Religion in Early Medieval China

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玄學

Edited by Alan K. L. Chan and Yuet-Keung Lo

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Introduction

Early medieval China was a time of profound change.[1] The fall of the Han dynasty altered drastically the Chinese political and intellectual landscape. Leaving aside changes on the political front, which fall outside the scope of the present work, questions about "heaven" and the affairs of the world that seemed to have been fully resolved under the once sure and confident guide of Han Confucianism resurfaced and demanded fresh answers. In this context, new currents in philosophy, religion, and other domains clamored to the fore and left an indelible mark on the subsequent development of Chinese thought and culture. Although continuity is never entirely absent in historical and cultural change, early medieval China saw the rise of *xuanxue* 玄學 (learning of the mysterious Dao), the establishment of religious Daoism, and the introduction of Buddhism that fueled major renovation in Chinese tradition. The eleven essays presented here address key aspects of these developments. In the companion to this volume, *Interpretation and Literature in Early Medieval China*, also published by SUNY Press (2010), a different team of scholars examine some of the equally important changes in hermeneutic orientation and literature and society.

The first five studies in this volume are devoted to *xuanxue*, the principal philosophical development in early medieval China. *Xuanxue* is complex and merits an introduction.[2] The word *xuan* 玄 depicts literally a shade of black with dark red.[3] In the *Shijing* 詩經 (Book of Poetry), for example, *xuan* is sometimes used to describe the color of fabrics or robes.[4] *Xuan* is tropically paired with *huang* 黃 (yellow),[5] and the two have come to be understood as the color of heaven and

earth, respectively. The *Yijing* 易經 (Book of Changes), indeed, explicitly states that "heaven is *xuan* [in color] and earth is yellow."[6] As the noted Eastern Han *Yijing* commentator Xun Shuang 荀爽 (128–190) explains: "Heaven is yang and starts from the northeast; thus its color is dark red. Earth is yin and starts from the southwest; thus its color is yellow."[7] Without going into the cosmological underpinnings of this reading, it should be clear at least how *xuan* has come to be invoked as a general emblem of heaven in later usage.

Chapter 1 of the *Laozi* 老子, in its received eighty-one chapter form, as is well known, speaks of the Dao as *xuan* (cf. chapters 6, 10, 15, 51, 56, and 65). The question is, of course, What does it mean? An Eastern Han interpreter might not unreasonably consider *xuan* as referring to heaven here as well, as the *Heshang gong* 河上公 commentary to the *Laozi*, for example, did, given the established meaning of the word.[8] However, Wei-Jin scholars in the main saw much more in it than a direct reference to heaven. In engaging the *Laozi* anew, they contended that *xuan* harbors a deeper significance, signifying the utter impenetrability and profound mystery of the Dao, both in its radical transcendence and generative power. In a general sense, then, *xuanxue* denotes philosophical investigation of the unfathomable, profound, and mysterious Dao, although the term itself did not come into currency until later.

During the fifth century CE, *xuanxue* formed a part of the official curriculum at the imperial academy, together with Ru 儒 or "Confucian" learning, "literature" (*wen* 文) and "history" (*shi* 史).[9] The subject matter of *xuanxue* (or better, "Xuanxue," capitalized and without italics, as it is used as a proper noun) in this narrower, formal sense revolves especially around the *Yijing*, *Laozi*, and *Zhuangzi* 莊子—then collectively called the "three treatises on the mystery [of the Dao]" (*sanxuan* 三玄)[10]—and selected commentaries to them. Later historians traced the origins of this scholarly tradition to the third century, or more precisely to the Zhengshi 正始 reign era (240–249) of the Wei dynasty, and applied the term *xuanxue* retrospectively to designate the perceived dominant intellectual current of Wei-Jin thought as a whole. This focuses attention on the general orientation of Wei-Jin philosophy, but it may give the wrong impression that *xuanxue* professes a single point of view. In traversing the world of thought in early medieval China, it is important to bear in mind that *xuanxue* in the general sense—as distinguished from a branch of official learning, which reflects political interest and is the result of a long process of intellectual distillation—encompasses a broad range of philosophical positions and does not represent a monolithic movement or "school."

In the past, *xuanxue* was commonly translated as "Neo-Daoism" (or rather, "Neo-Taoism," as most scholars then followed the Wade-Giles system of romanization). The idea was that as Han Confucianism lost its commanding appeal—deemed not only incapable of effecting order in a fragmented world but more damagingly as part of the problem that led to the downfall of the Han dynasty—a revival of Daoist philosophy came to the rescue in charting new intellectual directions for the elite in early medieval China. "Neo-Daoism" often came to be associated with a kind of "escapism" as well. Because celebrated scholar-officials (*mingshi* 名士) were frequently implicated in the incessant power struggles at court and more than a few suffered violent deaths as a consequence, they turned to, as it were, according to this view, "purer" pursuits in Daoist metaphysics and ontology away from political criticism.

There is little doubt that some scholars at the time considered the teachings of Han Confucianism problematic. In some respects, the ethos of the age embraces an iconoclastic counterculture movement, against the Confucian orthodoxy or "teaching of names" (*mingjiao* 名教), that is, the whole structure of rituals and morality sanctioned by Han traditions and justified as having their roots in the teachings of the ancient sages. There is also no reason not to believe that some were totally disgusted with the politics of the day and yearned for a life of simple quietude. Reclusion, indeed, was a major theme in the story of early medieval China, as Alan Berkowitz reminds us in his contribution to this volume. However, just as reclusion is far more complex than running away from a troubled world, the important point to note here is that neither "anti-Confucian" nor "escapist" captures the outlook of the majority of *xuanxue* scholars.

Most of the leading intellectuals in early medieval China remained committed to the quest for order, to finding ways to restore peace and prosperity to the land. They may have been interested in metaphysics and ontology, but as many of the authors assembled here emphasize, their philosophical investigation is not without practical aim. Indeed, one might venture that it is political philosophy and ethics that inform *xuanxue*. Moreover, although Wei-Jin scholars disagreed on many issues, almost all agreed that Confucius was the highest sage. The problem is not Confucius, in other words, but distortions of his teaching. From this perspective, *xuanxue* is fundamentally concerned with unlocking the profound mystery of the Dao by reinterpreting the teachings of Confucius and other sages, which are seen to have been eclipsed by the excesses of Han Confucian learning. Properly understood, the teachings of Confucius, Laozi, and other sages and near-sages converge in varying

degree in a deep understanding of the Dao as not only the *arche* and *telos* of heaven and earth but also the paradigmatic model or way of individual and political action. In this context, different interpretations of the one "Dao-centered" teaching vied for attention, which captured the imagination of the literati throughout early medieval China.

During the early years of the Wei dynasty, through the reigns of Emperor Wen 文 (Cao Pi 曹丕, r. 220–226) and Emperor Ming 明 (Cao Rui 曹叡, r. 227–239), a measure of order was restored. Political reform promised much-needed change and created an air of optimism. Emperor Ming was succeeded by Cao Fang 曹芳 (r. 240–254), who ascended the throne when he was still a young boy. His reign was initially named Zhengshi, "right beginning," perhaps reflecting the hope that the Wei Empire would now flourish after a firm foundation had been laid. During the Zhengshi era, politics was dominated by two powerful statesmen: Cao Shuang 曹爽 (d. 249) and Sima Yi 司馬懿 (179–251), who were entrusted with guiding the young emperor and advancing the interests of the Wei ruling house. Cao Shuang proved the stronger of the two at first, until he was ousted by Sima Yi in a carefully engineered takeover in 249, which brought to a close not only the Zhengshi era but also effectively the rule of the Cao family, although the Sima clan did not formally abolish the reign of Wei and establish the Jin dynasty in its place until 265. During the Zhengshi era, new ideas blossomed, which sought to reclaim in different ways the perceived true teachings of the sages and worthies of old, as expressed in such classics as the *Yijing*, *Lunyu* 論語 (Analects), *Laozi,* and *Zhuangzi*. Later scholars often looked back to the Zhengshi period nostalgically as the "golden age" of a new kind of learning that has come to be remembered as *xuanxue*.

Whether or not there was in fact a tight Confucian "orthodoxy" during the Han dynasty may be open to debate; there is little disagreement, however, that there were attempts at forging one. Regardless of its content, orthodoxy seeks intellectual closure, a clear demarcation of the critical space in which a dialogue with tradition may be engaged. Toward the end of the Han period, critical challenges to certain elements of the Confucian edifice had already emerged. This gathered pace in the uncertain world of post-Han China. While it would be a mistake to conclude that early *xuanxue* scholars started with a completely blank slate, in which Confucian culture and learning had been obliterated, during the early years of the Wei dynasty, intellectual discourse flourished in relatively open surroundings, in which a thorough interrogation of tradition not only became possible but was also deemed a matter of urgency for the educated elite.

"Pure conversation" (*qingtan* 清談) debates were one main channel through which Wei-Jin and Six Dynasties intellectuals questioned tradition and shared their ideas. *Qingtan* was the distinctive mode of intellectual activity in early medieval China, in which men of letters gathered socially and debated on major philosophical issues of the day such as the relationship between "words" (*yan* 言) and "meaning" (*yi* 意) and that between a person's "capacity" (*cai* 才) and inborn "nature" (*xing* 性).[11] Almost without exception, the scholars later recognized as major *xuanxue* proponents were virtuosi in the art of argumentation. They also engaged in debates through writing—the many treatises or "discourses" (*lun* 論) they composed on these and other topics such as "nourishing life" (*yangsheng* 養生) and whether human beings are by nature inclined toward learning (*ziran haoxue* 自然好學) were expected to and often did attract spirited criticism, which in turn provided a platform for rejoinders and further debate.[12] The most important medium of philosophical renewal, however, remained the composition of commentaries on key classical works, at which *xuanxue* scholars excelled and through which they bequeathed a lasting legacy to later scholars.

Prior to the Wei dynasty, the *Laozi* and the *Zhuangzi*, though certainly not unknown, were perhaps somewhat marginalized in a world dominated by Confucian learning. To the extent that these Daoist classics now took center stage, it is justified to speak of a revival of interest in philosophical Daoism. Inasmuch as *xuanxue* seeks to unveil the truth of the Dao, it is not entirely inappropriate to describe it as a kind of "Neo-Daoism." The difficulty, of course, is that "Daoism" does not sufficiently distinguish the concept of Dao from the "Daoist" school. Brook Ziporyn, indeed, felt compelled to coin a term, "Daoishness," precisely to mark this distinction in his presentation here (e.g., p. 109). Modern Chinese studies of *xuanxue* often characterize it as an attempt in reinterpreting Confucianism through the lens of Daoism.[13] This presupposes a sharp partisan divide and seems less preferable to approaching *xuanxue* as a broad philosophical front that seeks to lay bare the ideal order of a Dao-centered world, which the sages not only understood but also embodied. Again, metaphysics and ethics merge in an effort to provide a new blueprint for order, which transcends narrow partisan concerns.

Recognizing that "Neo-Daoism" may not be a fitting translation of *xuanxue*, recent studies often favor the term "Dark Learning" or "Learning of the Dark"—the latter to emphasize that *xuan* functions as a noun in this construction. "Dark Learning" may be able to avoid the ambiguity that "Neo-Daoism" faces, but it is not without difficulty,

for while it highlights the ineffability of the Dao, it does not immediately convey the sense of profundity and sublimity that is part and parcel of the meaning of *xuan* in this context. More important, while the subject of the discourse may appear "dark," the discourse itself is not. "Learning of the Dark" is grammatically clearer, but it may give the sense of something sinister. It is also not exactly economical and fares little better, in my view, than alternatives such as "learning of the mysterious Dao" or "learning of the profound" in stylistic terms. One should not forget that there are critics of *xuanxue* in early medieval China and later ages, who would employ the term *xuan* in a pejorative sense, as a type of discourse that is "dark," obscure, and insubstantial, high-sounding but empty words at best, and at worst, a deliberate obfuscation, which if allowed to grow would spell doom to good government. To avoid misunderstanding, *xuanxue* may be better left untranslated, though not unexplained.

A full discussion of *xuanxue* will have to be undertaken separately in a different venue. These introductory remarks should suffice to place the five studies on *xuanxue* that follow in a general context. A leading political and intellectual figure of the Zhengshi era was He Yan 何晏 (d. 249). Though widely recognized as one of the "founding" figures of *xuanxue*, his contribution to early medieval Chinese philosophy has not been adequately examined. Focusing on the surviving fragments of He Yan's "Discourse on Dao" ("Dao lun" 道論), "Discourse on the Nameless" ("Wuming lun" 無名論), and other writings, I argue that He Yan offers a coherent account of the Dao and its ethical embodiment in the sage, based on a particular construal of the concepts of "namelessness" and "harmony." The Dao is nameless and may be described as "nothing" (*wu* 無), as the *Laozi* especially has made clear, but this does not entail that it is "lacking" in any way. On the contrary, for He Yan, the Dao is nameless not because it is ontologically empty but because it is complete, an integral fullness in its pristine state that does not admit of distinctions. This has important ethical and political implications. As little of He Yan's writings have been preserved, any reconstruction of his explication of Dao cannot but involve a relatively heavy dose of conjecture. In my paper, I refer at some length to the *Renwu zhi* 人物志 (An Account of Human Capacities) by Liu Shao 劉卲, a senior contemporary of He Yan, which may be compared with Zong-qi Cai's discussion in his essay, "Evolving Practices of *Guan* and Liu Xie's [劉勰, ca. 465–ca. 532] Theory of Literary Interpretation," in the companion volume.

Zhengshi *xuanxue* is represented especially by He Yan and Wang Bi 王弼 (226–249). The two studies by Jude Chua and Tze-ki Hon are

devoted to the latter and complement each other well. Wang Bi's influence on the subsequent development of Chinese philosophy is immense. Though politically a protégé of He Yan, Wang Bi proved more than the former's equal in philosophical accomplishment. Wang broke new ground in radically reinterpreting the *Yijing* and the *Laozi*, and in so doing, perhaps more than anyone else had, brought into focus some of the key questions that shaped philosophical discourse in early medieval China. In his study, Chua focuses on the semiotic and political roots of Wang Bi's interpretation of the *Laozi*, whereas Hon undertakes a detailed analysis of the political dimension of Wang Bi's *Yijing* commentary.

For Chua, fundamentally it is Wang Bi's analysis of the relationship between "names" (*ming* 名) and "forms" (*xing* 形), or more precisely the priority of forms over names, that provides a basis for his larger philosophical enterprise. "All names arise from forms," as Wang Bi declares; "never has a form arisen from a name" (53). This finds a ready parallel in the relationship between moral substance and reputation—without the former, Wang Bi is saying, the latter would be empty, which is also to say that the promise of fame and the benefit that goes with it will not yield genuine moral order. For this reason, the sage-ruler abides by the "nameless" and "nonaction" (*wuwei* 無為) in realizing peace and order, the desired political outcome. It is this and not any metaphysical logic that guides Wang Bi's new interpretation of Dao as "nothing" or "nonbeing" (*wu*). In other words, the move from a theory of language to ethics and politics and finally to metaphysics is facilitated not so much by philosophical means as by literary "equivocation." Seen in this light, Chua also argues, some of the main differences in current Wang Bi scholarship can be resolved.

For Hon, a close reading of Wang Bi's *Yijing* commentary shows how Wang carefully negotiated a view of government that reflects the political realities of his day, seeking a delicate balance between the need for centralized control and local collaboration, and between decisive reform and prudence in implementation. Importantly, Hon compares Wang Bi's understanding of the *Yijing* with that of several Eastern Han commentators, a subject that has not been addressed in any detail by Western scholars previously. Whereas Eastern Han scholars typically focused on the images of the trigrams or hexagrams and devised elaborate techniques to allow the interpreter to map out fully the perceived system of hexagrams and their cosmological references, Wang Bi took a different approach in arguing that the hexagrams are symbols that depict concrete situations and affairs, bringing into view the dynamics of change. Applied to politics, what is critical is how the ruler understands and responds to

each situation, and how he is able to employ the different elements at play, such as the six lines of a hexagram, to contribute to the good of the larger whole.

Together with Wang Bi, Guo Xiang 郭象 (d. 312) helped to secure the place of *xuanxue* in the history of Chinese philosophy. A brilliant interpreter of the *Zhuangzi*, Guo Xiang earned the praise of his contemporaries as being "second only to Wang Bi."[14] Indeed, Guo's commentary on the *Zhuangzi*, notwithstanding its possible indebtedness to the earlier effort of Xiang Xiu 向秀 (ca. 227–280), was instrumental to the transmission of the Daoist classic itself.[15] Brook Ziporyn puts forward a provocative interpretation of the concept of *li* 理—the underlying "pattern," "principle," or "coherence" of things and affairs—in Wang Bi and Guo Xiang.

The concept of *li* figures centrally in early medieval Chinese intellectual discourse and has impacted strongly the development of both Chinese Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism. The general scholarly consensus is that whereas Wang Bi traces all phenomena to a single ontological principle, Guo Xiang locates the meaning of Dao in the plenitude and diversity of beings. In direct opposition to this view, Ziporyn argues that it is Wang Bi who developed "a theory of distinctive individual principles of things" (97 and 127), and that for Guo Xiang there is only one "principle" that underlies the phenomenal world—namely, that of "naturalness" or "self-so-ness" (*ziran* 自然). Whereas for Wang Bi, a "mini-Dao," so to speak, informs each concrete situation—a point that recalls Tze-ki Hon's analysis of Wang Bi's reading of the *Yijing*—for Guo Xiang, *ziran* signifies an entity as such—its "true self" and "the very process of its becoming" (120).

In this sense, while it would be appropriate to speak of "principles" in Wang Bi's new account of Dao, Guo Xiang's *li* signals but the facticity of being, prior to the arising of value distinction, emotional attachment, and other "traces" of experience; as such, *li* is no principle at all, if we mean by it an underlying, immanent structure that sets out the particular meaning, value, or raison d'être of a thing. If accepted, this would change considerably the way in which the history of Chinese philosophy has been written. Ziporyn also distinguishes between an "ironic" and "non-ironic" sense of Dao and *li*, which form the background to not only the philosophy of Wang Bi and Guo Xiang but also *xuanxue* as a whole.

With the close of the Zhengshi era and the passing of He Yan and Wang Bi in 249, as studies of Wei-Jin thought often assert, the first phase of *xuanxue* also came to an end. The next chapter of the *xuanxue*

story is usually given to the "Seven Worthies (or Sages) of the Bamboo Grove" (*zhulin qixian* 竹林七賢), a remarkable group of intellectuals who were gifted not only philosophically but also artistically, and who enjoy extraordinary recognition even today. Among them, Xi Kang 嵇康 (or Ji Kang in modern Chinese pronunciation, 223/224–262), Ruan Ji 阮籍 (210–263), and Xiang Xiu are generally recognized as particularly important for their contribution to Chinese music, poetry, and philosophy.

In terms of age, they were contemporaries of He Yan and Wang Bi; as such, they do not constitute a second generation of *xuanxue* scholars. However, they did have to contend with the harsh political realities that appeared after the Zhengshi era, when the Wei government came under the control of Sima Shi 司馬師 (208–255) and Sima Zhao 司馬昭 (211–265), the two sons of Sima Yi, who were more than keen in eliminating any opposition to their dominance. Xi Kang was related to the Cao family by marriage and died at the hand of the Sima regime. Ulrike Middendorf, in her study of Xi Kang's famous essay, "Sheng wu aile lun" 聲無哀樂論 (Discourse on [the nature of] sounds [as] not having sorrow or joy)—a work deemed so important and of such influence that no self-respecting intellectual in early medieval China could afford to ignore[16]—seeks to bring out its structure and political undertones.

Middendorf first provides a concise account of the Confucian view of music and shows how the concept of "harmony," or more precisely "harmonious sound" (*hesheng* 和聲), undergirds Xi Kang's musical theory and political philosophy. Harmony captures more than a musical ideal; it brings into view a conception of the nature of the sage, as Xi Kang plays on the "paronomasia" (143) of the two Chinese words, *shēng* 聲 (sound) and *shèng* 聖 (sage), and a vision of political order—a vision that, perhaps surprisingly, has a "Xunzian ring" to it (153). Furthermore, as Middendorf argues, Xi Kang's essay should be understood in the context of the political turmoil of his day. This study connects well with the chapter on He Yan and Tze-ki Hon's discussion of Wang Bi. The relationship between "names" and "actuality" and the concept of *li* (principle or coherence) also feature centrally in Xi Kang's essay, which invites comparison with the studies by Jude Chua and Brook Ziporyn. Sharing basically the same philosophical vocabulary and grappling with the same fundamental issues in ethics and politics, *xuanxue* discourses understandably strike a similar pose. Family resemblances, however, do not translate into uniformity. What these studies show is that *xuanxue* is richly complex. As opposed to being a homogeneous school of thought, one could say it constitutes, rather, a

field of contested meaning, in which different interpretations of Dao, especially their application in ethics and politics, are put forward for debate. Middendorf's paper also contains extensive references to the secondary literature, which should prove useful to students of Wei-Jin thought and culture.

The Jin dynasty came to an end in 420, followed by a series of short-lived dynasties in both north and south China. While "pure conversation" continued with undiminished rigor, debating old *xuanxue* favorites such as "nourishing life," "words and meaning," and "sounds not having sorrow or joy,"[17] it did not produce too many new ideas. No doubt, *xuanxue* was made a part of the official curriculum, but it was religious Daoism and Buddhism that saw the most exhilarating development.

Religious Daoism has deep roots, but as an organized religion its historical beginnings may be traced to the Eastern Han dynasty, with the establishment of the "Way of the Celestial Master" (Tianshi dao 天師道).[18] As is well known, the founding of the Tianshi dao is predicated on a new revelation of the Dao given to Zhang Ling 張陵 (or Zhang Daoling 張道陵, as he is also called, in recognition of his achievement in Dao) in 142 by the "Most High Lord Lao," that is, the divine Laozi. A crucial issue in the study of early religious Daoism is the relationship between the Way of the Celestial Master and local, "popular" religious beliefs and practices. This is the issue that Chi-tim Lai examines in his contribution to this volume.

In particular, drawing from a large number of religious Daoist sources, Lai focuses on the ritual of submitting "personal writs" (*shoushu* 手書) to the divine officials of "heaven, earth, and water"—an act of confession for the expiation of sin, which is understood to be the direct cause of diseases and calamities—as a unifying thread that binds the various strands of early Celestial Master Daoist beliefs and rituals together. The "Three Officials" (*sanguan* 三官) are seen to be the very "emanations of the *qi* of the Dao (道氣)" (187), who represent the "correct law" (*zhengfa* 正法) and with whom the devotees enter into a solemn covenant (182). While the early Tianshi dao cannot but be indebted to certain local religious traditions, as a comparison with some of the Han "apocryphal" literature (*chenwei* 讖緯) and "tomb-quelling texts" (*zhenmu wen* 鎮墓文) demonstrates, it distinguishes itself through its conception of the divine administration of justice and the promise of redemption through confession and petition to celestial officials. Many of the examples that Lai cites show vividly not only the pervasive concern with disease and morality but also the centrality of the family

in the early medieval Chinese religious imagination, a theme Stephen Bokenkamp examines closely in his study here.

During the Eastern Jin dynasty, the rapidly growing religious Daoist tradition was ripe for reform and expansion. Two new sects emerged—namely, the Shangqing 上清 (commonly translated as "Highest Clarity" or "Highest Purity") and Lingbao 靈寶 (Numinous Treasure).[19] Bokenkamp's essay focuses on the latter, especially its alleged borrowings from Buddhism. "Influence" is never simple. Rather than seeing the Lingbao masters simplistically as "surrendering" to Buddhist insights, Bokenkamp argues cogently that they "explicitly manipulate them in ways that served to reassert traditional Chinese values, to answer certain questions, or solve certain problems" (204). The central notion of "rebirth" in Lingbao scriptures may have been taken from Buddhism, but the way in which it is interpreted in the light of family ties and concerns, including the fate of one's departed ancestors, renders it distinctively Chinese. The hermeneutic thrust of Bokenkamp's approach brings into sharp relief the need to take into account the intended audience of Daoist scriptures, and what matters to them. If the Tianshi dao of the Eastern Han can be seen as a "reformation" of Chinese popular religion, as Lai suggests, resulting in a new religious Daoist identity, Lingbao Daoism saw its mission as reforming existing Daoist practices, directing its numerous injunctions not at Buddhism or local cults but at the Daoist community itself. The two essays by Lai and Bokenkamp both bring out important ethical issues that confronted the development of religious Daoism in early medieval China. Bokenkamp's may also be profitably compared with the essay by Robert Campany, "Narrative in the Self-Presentation of Transcendence-Seekers," in the companion volume.

Regardless of when Buddhism was first introduced into China, by the late Eastern Han dynasty it was beginning to make its presence felt.[20] The period of disunity that followed proved conducive to the flourishing of new ideas and practices, and yielded fertile ground for Buddhism to sink its roots in China. There was then an urgent need to explain Buddhist doctrines and to translate Buddhist terms and concepts into Chinese. One important hermeneutical tool that emerged in this context was *geyi* 格義, usually translated as "matching concepts" or "matching meanings." By means of *geyi*, as it is generally understood, individual Buddhist terms and concepts were matched with existing Chinese, especially Daoist, terms, which then made it possible for the new foreign religion to find ready acceptance in early medieval China. But is this really what *geyi* meant?

Victor Mair challenges the conventional understanding of *geyi* and argues that it "was not a translation technique at all but an exegetical method" (227), designed specifically to handle the large supply of numbered lists of concepts such as the four noble truths and the twelve links of dependent origination in Buddhist texts. It did not work, according to Mair, and was phased out quickly, for unlike the Indian tradition, the Chinese evidently did not invest nearly as much in organizing and presenting their ideas in enumerated lists. How, then, did *geyi* come to be understood as "matching concepts" and assigned a central role in the story of the Buddhist "conquest" of China? Mair traces this also in his analysis, which is certain to ignite debates among students of Chinese Buddhism.

The development of Buddhism in early medieval China is nothing less than spectacular. Both in the north and the south, Buddhism gained fervent following by a large number of elite clans, including royal families, and began to spread widely among the populace. Royal patronage was instrumental to the success of Buddhism then. Emperor Wen 文 of Song (Liu Yilong 劉義隆, r. 424–453), for example, is well known to have been a staunch supporter of the Buddhist faith. During the Southern Qi dynasty, the devotion of Xiao Zilang 蕭子良 (460–494), Prince of Jingling 竟陵, to Buddhism is equally well known. In the north, although twice, in 446 and 547, Buddhism came under the attack of the state, it flourished throughout the Northern Dynasties. Of all the royal patrons of Buddhism during this time, probably none was more devout and influential than Emperor Wu 武 of Liang (Xiao Yan 蕭衍, r. 502–549) in the south, who was not only a generous benefactor but also a member of the *sangha*, who several times "gave himself" (*sheshen* 捨身) to the Buddhist order; that is to say, surrendered his status as emperor and lived as a monk.

Emperor Wu is often praised in Buddhist sources as the "emperor bodhisattva" par excellence. Indeed, the Emperor took to identifying himself as the "Pusajie dizi huangdi" 菩薩戒弟子皇帝, "Emperor-disciple of the bodhisattva precepts," as Kathy Ku points out in her study. Moreover, Ku argues that in this case the "emperor bodhisattva" ideal should be understood more finely in terms of the Indian tradition of *Buddharāja*, that is, someone who is Buddha and *rāja* (king) at once (275). Even more specifically, on the basis of not only textual but also iconographic evidence, Ku suggests that Emperor Wu looked to the tradition of the *Buddharāja* Maitreya in his attempt to fashion an exemplary Buddhist kingdom in southern China. This goes beyond clarifying a technical point in the history of Chinese Buddhism, but brings into

view both religious and political motivation in the spread of Buddhism. Like Mair's study, this, too, should provoke some debate.

Religious Daoism and Buddhism are large topics, but the four essays outlined above should give some insight into the lush religious landscape of early medieval China. Several essays in the companion volume also touch on religion—besides Campany's contribution referred to earlier, Timothy Wai-keung Chan's study of "'Jade Flower' and the Motif of Mystic Excursion in Early Religious Daoist Poetry," Cynthia Chennault's "Representing the Uncommon: Temple-Visit Lyrics from the Liang to Sui Dynasties," and Mu-chou Poo's "Justice, Morality, and Skepticism in Six Dynasties Ghost Stories" should be of particular interest.[21]

The two essays that close this volume address larger themes, cutting across different domains of the Chinese intellectual world. As mentioned, Alan Berkowitz scrutinizes the widespread phenomenon of reclusion in early medieval China. The ideal of reclusion can hardly be reduced to a kind of one-dimensional "hiding" from political turmoil, although there is no denying that politics was fraught with peril at that time. Those who turned to reclusion did so for a variety of reasons, as Berkowitz points out after a historical introduction, including what we would call today lifestyle choices. Nor should reclusion be branded simplistically a partisan "Confucian" or "Daoist" pursuit. Significantly, whereas in ancient China reclusion entailed sociopolitical withdrawal, many early medieval Chinese recluses remained deeply engaged both socially and politically, though they might have renounced public office. Indeed, there is little reason why "high-minded" or worthy individuals should not be "allowed to freely transition between reclusion and office, office and reclusion" (307). "Reclusion within the court" (307) and "noetic reclusion" (308), that is, reclusion as a state of mind, further added to the complexity of the tradition. As reclusion became an integral part of mainstream high culture, embraced by the scholar-official class as a whole, it found expression in a range of forms and contexts. This study makes a strong case for a "thick" analysis of early medieval Chinese culture, probing beyond abstract ideological motivation to uncover the contexts and conditions that mattered to real individuals.

The concept of "destiny" (*ming* 命) is probably one of the most powerful concepts in the history of Chinese thought. Its presence in Chinese culture is virtually ubiquitous, from antiquity to the present. Yuet-Keung Lo surveys ideas of destiny and retribution in early medieval China. The concept of *ming*, of course, has a long history; but the decline of the Han dynasty threw into question earlier assumptions

and compelled reinterpretation. Does *ming* entail a kind of "hard" determinism that precludes human intervention, or could a "softer" rendition of *ming* accommodate the efficacy of moral pursuits?

Framed this way, Lo examines the concept of "retribution" (*chengfu* 承負) in the *Taiping jing* 太平經 and the *Xiang'er* 想爾 commentary on the *Laozi*, both important scriptures of early religious Daoism, and how it negotiates between "hard destiny" and "soft destiny." The religious Daoists were certainly not alone in this effort; as Lo goes on to show, the concept of destiny plays an equally important role in early medieval Confucian learning and *xuanxue* philosophy. In particular, the concept of *ziran* in Wang Bi and Guo Xiang reflects different attempts at coming to terms with the perceived reality of *ming*. "Hard" destiny proved difficult to refute, giving rise to a widely shared and deeply felt "romantic spirit of general despair" (336) among the literati. Finally, Lo turns to the Buddhist concept of karma, arguing that its success "lies in its removal of the contradictions inherent in the *chengfu* theory by introducing the idea of individual karma and rejecting the worldview of hard destiny" (337), thereby opening "an optimistic vista" to "a sustainable belief in human ability to mould a person's destiny" (342).

The studies by Berkowitz and Lo both bring into view the intricate terrain of early medieval Chinese philosophy and religion, which probably no single book could exhaust. The present volume makes but a modest effort in focusing attention on it, from an interdisciplinary perspective, which we believe offers significant methodological advantage. One consistent message that emerges from these studies, besides the richness of the field, is that the world of philosophy and religion in early medieval China was preoccupied with practical concerns. Even *xuanxue*, which can soar into abstract heights, with its interest in fathoming the roots of all things and affairs in the Dao, proves decidedly "earthbound," strongly tied to the world of ethics and politics. Philosophers, just as recluses, scholar-officials, princes and emperors, Daoist adepts and Buddhist monks, could not but respond in different ways to the challenges that marked early medieval China, even if some were captivated by the mystery of the Dao or the promise of "otherworldly" transcendence. Together with the nine essays on interpretation and literature in the companion volume, the studies here hope to provide a ready point of departure for further research.

No attempt has been made to standardize the translation of Chinese terms in this or the companion work. For example, whereas Chua emphasizes that *xuanxue* should be understood particularly in the sense of "Studies of the Profound," Mair opts for "Dark/Abstruse/Mysterious/

Metaphysical Learning" (243), to bring out the different connotations of the term *xuan*. Translation is ultimately a form of interpretation. Some differences, admittedly, are essentially stylistic—for example, whereas Stephen Bokenkamp and I translate "Tianshi dao" as the "Way of the Celestial Master," Chi-tim Lai prefers "Heavenly Master," in agreement with a number of other scholars of religious Daoism. Nevertheless, the principle of authorial judgment takes precedence. The different translations on offer serve to invite a fuller exploration of the world of philosophy and religion in early medieval China.

Chinese characters are provided for important terms and extended quotations, so that the reader can engage the primary sources directly. The characters for the Chinese dynasties, however, will appear only in the Introduction and are not repeated in the essays. Transliterations are omitted generally for phrases that exceed four characters. The Chinese texts cited are punctuated in the way the authors understand them. All Chinese terms are given in *Hanyu pinyin*, except for the names of some authors who publish in English (e.g., Wing-tsit Chan), titles of books and articles, and some proper names (e.g., Taipei, Yangtze). Wade-Giles transliterations are also kept in quotations, to preserve the integrity of the original, with *pinyin* equivalents given in parenthesis.

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Notes

1. "Early medieval China" is not an exact term. It is now generally used by Western scholars to refer to the period of Chinese history that spans between the fall of the Han 漢 dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) and the founding of the Sui 隋 dynasty (589–618), corresponding to the period known as "Wei Jin Nanbeichao" 魏晉南北朝 (Wei, Jin, and the Southern and Northern Dynasties) in Chinese historiography. However, few would

object if the term is stretched fifty or so years at either end; that is to say, from the last years of the Eastern or Later Han dynasty (25–220) to the early years of the Tang 唐 (618–907), after which China may be said to have entered its high Middle Ages.

For readers who may not be familiar with early medieval China, the Wei (220–265) followed the Han in official Chinese "dynastic" histories, although it had to share the "Central States" (*zhongguo* 中國) or more generally the "world under heaven" (*tianxia* 天下) with two rival kingdoms—the Shu 蜀 (221–263) in the Sichuan area and the Wu 吳 (222–280) south of the Yangtze River. The term "Three Kingdoms" (*sanguo* 三國) is thus also used to designate this period of Chinese history. The Jin (265–420) succeeded the Wei and reunified China for a short time. Beset with internal struggles and external threats from the start, however, it suffered a major defeat in 311 by the Xiongnu 匈奴 under Liu Cong 劉聰 (d. 318), who captured the Jin capital Luoyang 洛陽. The Jin ruling house rallied around Emperor Min 愍 (Sima Ye 司馬鄴, r. 313–317) in Chang'an 長安; but the respite was temporary and the Western Jin dynasty (265–316) soon came to an end. The Jin court was reconstituted in Jiankang 建康 (modern Nanjing), east of Luoyang, south of the Yangtze River, under Sima Rui 睿 (276–322), who assumed the title King of Jin in 317 and a year later, Emperor Yuan 元, the first emperor of the Eastern Jin dynasty (317–420).

The Eastern Jin enjoyed a period of relative peace. The large-scale migration of especially upper-class families from the north transformed not only the political scene but also the southern Chinese cultural milieu. After the Eastern Jin, a series of four dynasties ruled the south; namely, Song 宋 (420–479), Qi 齊 (479–502), Liang 梁 (502–557), and Chen 陳 (557–589). These are the "Southern Dynasties"; the Song is often referred to as "Liu-Song" 劉宋, as the authors here do, after the name of its rulers, to distinguish it from the later Song dynasty (960–1279). In discussions of post-Han developments in the south, the term "Six Dynasties" (*liuchao* 六朝) is also generally used, as it is in some of the essays here, which refers to the Kingdom of Wu, the Eastern Jin, and the four Southern Dynasties. All six had their capital in Jiankang (or Jianye 建鄴, as the city was called when it served as the capital of Wu). In the north, from the start of the fourth century to 439, some sixteen kingdoms were founded, mainly by members of the Xiongnu, Qie 羯, Xianbei 鮮卑, Di 氐, and Qiang 羌 ethnic groups, collectively called "Hu" 胡. There were more than five such groups, and more than sixteen kingdoms rose and fell during this period; nevertheless, traditional Chinese history, written from the ethnic Han perspective, uniformly laments the invasion of the five Hu "barbarian" groups and the "Sixteen Kingdoms" that "ravaged" the north. In 439, the Northern Wei 北魏 (386–534) under its Xianbei ruler Tuoba Tao 拓跋燾 triumphed over its rivals and largely unified the north. This marked

the start of the Northern Dynasties. The Northern Wei eventually was split into two and succeeded by the Northern Qi 北齊 (550–577) and the Northern Zhou 北周 (557–581). For a historical introduction to early medieval China, see Wolfram Eberhard, *A History of China*, fourth edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), chapter VII.

Though "early medieval China" is now widely used, we are aware that some scholars may consider the label "medieval" inappropriate, for a significant divide separates post-Han China from medieval Europe in political, economic, and other terms. "Early *imperial* China" may be a less problematic alternative, according to this view, although it does not quite distinguish the Han from the period of disunity that followed; or, to avoid the debate altogether, "Wei Jin Nanbeichao" or "Six Dynasties" should be used. This is not the issue that the authors in this project set out to resolve. What is not in dispute is that the period of Chinese history in question is important and perhaps has not been given sufficient attention in Western scholarship. The excellent essays in *State and Society in Early Medieval China*, edited by Albert Dien (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), focusing primarily on social and political history, provided a much needed impetus for research in this field. The recent arrival of Zong-qi Cai's edited volume, *Chinese Aesthetics: The Ordering of Literature, the Arts, and the Universe in the Six Dynasties* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004) hopefully signals renewed interest in early medieval China. Between 1990 and 2004, there are fine collections and individual studies such as Charles Holcombe's *In the Shadow of the Han: Literati Thought and Society at the Beginning of the Southern Dynasties* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), Robert F. Campany's *Strange Writing: Anomaly Accounts in Early Medieval China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), Alan Berkowitz's *Patterns of Disengagement: The Practice and Portrayal of Reclusion in Early Medieval China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), and Scott Pearce, Audrey Spiro, and Patricia Ebrey, eds., *Culture and Power in the Reconstitution of the Chinese Realm, 200–600* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001). This is not an exhaustive list. Nevertheless, there remains much room for further, especially interdisciplinary research in English on early medieval China.

2. Studies of *xuanxue* in the West focus primarily on individual thinkers. See, for example, Donald Holzman, *La vie et la pensee de Hi Kang (223–262 AP. J.-C.)* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1957), and *Poetry and Politics: The Life and Works of Juan Chi, A.D. 210–263* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976). Holzman's research has contributed significantly to the study of early medieval China. Some of his published essays have been collected and reprinted in Holzman, *Immortals, Festivals, and Poetry in Medieval China: Studies in Social and Intellectual History* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Variorum, 1998). The following works, listed in alphabetical

order, should also be of interest to students of *xuanxue*: Alan K. L. Chan, *Two Visions of the Way: A Study of the Wang Pi and Ho-shang Kung Commentaries on the Lao-tzu* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), and "Zhong Hui's *Laozi* Commentary and the Debate on Capacity and Nature in Third-Century China," *Early China* 28 (2003): 101–59; Robert G. Henricks, trans., *Philosophy and Argumentation in Third-Century China: The Essays of Hsi K'ang* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); Richard J. Lynn, trans. *The Classic of Changes: A New Translation of the I Ching as Interpreted by Wang Bi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994) and *The Classic of the Way and Virtue: A New Translation of the Tao-te ching of Laozi as Interpreted by Wang Bi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Richard B. Mather, "The Controversy over Conformity and Naturalness during the Six Dynasties," *History of Religions* 9, no. 2–3 (1969–1970): 160–80, and his monumental translation, *Shih-shuo Hsin-yü: A New Account of Tales of the World by Liu I-ch'ing with Commentary by Liu Chün* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976); Vincent Y. C., Shih, trans., *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons by Liu Hsieh: A Study of Thought and Pattern in Chinese Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959); J. K. Shyrock, trans., *The Study of Human Abilities: The Jen Wu Chih of Liu Shao* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1937; reprinted, New York: Paragon, 1966); Tang Yung-t'ung (Tang Yongtong), "Wang Bi's New Interpretation of the *I Ching* and the *Lun-yü*," trans. Walter Liebenthal, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 10 (1947): 124–61; Rudolf G. Wagner's three-volume study, *The Craft of a Chinese Commentator: Wang Bi on the Laozi* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), *Language, Ontology, and Political Philosophy in China: Wang Bi's Scholarly Exploration of the Dark (Xuanxue)* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), and *A Chinese Reading of the Daodejing: Wang Bi's Commentary on the Laozi with Critical Text and Translation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003); Ying-shih Yü, "Individualism and the Neo-Taoist Movement in Wei-Chin China," in *Individualism and Holism: Studies in Confucian and Taoist Values*, ed. Donald Munro (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1985), 121–55; and Brook Ziproyn, *The Penumbra Unbound: The Neo-Taoist Philosophy of Guo Xiang* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003). Also see the general discussion by Paul Demiéville in *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 1, *The Ch'in and Han Empires, 221 B.C.–A.D. 220*, ed. Denis Twitchett and Michael Loewe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), chapter 16, "Philosophy and Religion from Han to Sui," 808–78. In Chinese, the following deserve special mention: Tang Yongtong 湯用彤, *Wei-Jin xuanxue lungao* 魏晉玄學論稿, in *Tang Yongtong xueshu lunwenji* 湯用彤學術論文集 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1983); Wang Baoxuan 王

葆玹, *Zhengshi xuanxue* 正始玄學 (Ji'nan: Qi-Lu, 1987); Wang Xiaoyi 王曉毅, *Zhongguo wenhua de qingliu* 中國文化的清流 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue, 1991), and *Wang Bi pingzhuan* 王弼評傳 (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue, 1996); and Xu Kangsheng 許抗生, et al., *Wei-Jin xuanxue shi* 魏晉玄學史 (Xi'an: Shanxi Shifan daxue, 1989).

3. The Han dynasty lexicon, *Shuowen jiezi* gives two meanings for the word "*xuan*": (1) "hidden and far" (*youyuan* 幽遠), and (2) "black with dark red" (黑而有赤色); see Xu Shen 許慎 (fl. 100), with commentary by Duan Yucai 段玉裁 (1735–1815), *Shuowen jiezi zhu* 說文解字注 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1988), 159.
4. For example, see the poems "Qiyue" 七月 (Mao no. 154), "Caishu" 采菽 (Mao no. 222), and "Hanyi" 韓奕 (Mao no. 261). In some poems, it may be more generally rendered "dark"—e.g., "*xuan niao*" 玄鳥 (Mao no. 303 "Xuan niao") and "*xuan wang*" 玄王 (Mao no. 304 "Changfa" 長發) may be taken to mean "dark bird" and "dark king," respectively, although the former has also been more specifically identified as the swallow. See Arthur Waley, trans., *The Book of Songs* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1937), 275–77.
5. The poem "He cao bu huang" 何草不黃 (Mao no. 234) opens with these lines: "Every plant is yellow [*huang*]; everyday we march (何草不黃, 何日不行) . . . / Every plant is purple [*xuan*]; every man is torn from his wife (何草不玄, 何人不矜). . . ." As translated in James Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, volume 4, *The She King* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960), 424. Cf. Waley, *The Book of Songs*, 121.
6. The sixth or top line of hexagram #2, "Kun" 坤, reads: "Dragons war in the wilds; their blood, dark-red and yellow" (戰龍於野, 其血玄黃). The "Wenyan" 文言 commentary to this hexagram explains, "Now, 'dark-red and yellow' refer to a mixture [of the color] of heaven and earth. Heaven is dark red [in color], and earth is yellow" (夫玄黃者, 天地之雜也, 天玄而地黃). See Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574–648), *Zhouyi zhengyi* 周易正義, in *Zhouyi zhushu ji buzheng* 周易注疏及補正, *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏 edition (Taipei: Shijie, 1968), 1.7a–7b.
7. The Chinese text reads: "天者陽, 始於東北, 故色元 [=玄] 也。地者陰, 始於西南, 故色黃也." As cited in Li Dingzuo 李鼎祚 (Tang dynasty) comp., *Zhouyi jijie* 周易集解, in *Zhouyi zhushu ji buzheng*, *Shisanjing zhushu* edition (Taipei: Shijie, 1968), 37.
8. Heshang gong, or the "old master by the river," is a legendary figure who is said to have taught and transmitted his commentary on the *Laozi* to Emperor Wen 文 of Han (r. 179–157 BCE). I would date the commentary to the Eastern Han period, although some scholars are of the view that it is a later product of the Southern Dynasties; see my *Two Visions of the Way*, chapter 3, and "The Formation of the He-shang Kung [Heshang gong] Legend," in *Sages and Filial Sons: Mythology and Archaeology in Ancient China*, ed. Julia Ching and R. W. L. Guisso (Hong Kong:

Chinese University Press, 1991), 101–34. Consistently, the Heshang gong commentary renders "*xuan*" as "heaven" (e.g., commentary to *Laozi* chapters 1, 6, 15, and 65). See Zheng Chenghai 鄭成海, *Laozi Heshang gong zhu jiaoli* 老子河上公注斠理 (Taipei: Zhonghua, 1971), 9, 40, 93, and 397. The *Xiang'er* 想爾 commentary to the *Laozi*, a religious Daoist document that is generally traced to around 200 CE, similarly interprets *xuan* as heaven (chapters 10 and 15); see Rao Zongyi 饒宗頤, *Laozi Xiang'er zhu jiaozheng* 老子想爾注校證 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1991), 13 and 18. The influential Eastern Han commentator Gao You 高誘 (fl. 205–212) also understood *xuan* to mean heaven in his commentary to the *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (e.g., chapter 1, "Yuan Dao xun" 原道訓); see *Huainan honglie jijie* 淮南鴻烈集解, *Xinbian zhuzi jicheng* 新編諸子集成 edition (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1989), 23 and 36.

9. See, for example, the *Song shu* 宋書 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1983), 93.2293–94; cf. *Nan shi* 南史 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1975), 2.45–46. Also see *Nan Qi shu* 南齊書 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1983), 16.315. For a discussion, see Wang Baoxuan, *Zhengshi xuanxue*, 3. References to the standard "dynastic" histories in this book are all from the modern Zhonghua shuju 中華書局 punctuated edition and will be cited by their *juan* 卷 and page numbers.
10. Wang Baoxuan, *Zhengshi xuanxue*, 7, discusses the earliest references to this term in Chinese sources.
11. On the former, see my *Two Visions of the Way*, 32–34, and Wagner, *Language, Ontology, and Political Philosophy in China*, 7–15; on the latter, see my "What are the 'Four Roots of Capacity and Nature'?" in *Wisdom in China and the West*, ed. Vincent Shen and Willard G. Oxtoby (Washington, DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2004), 143–84.
12. These two debates have been translated in Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation in Third-Century China*, 21–70 and 135–43.
13. For example, see Xu Kangsheng et al., *Wei-Jin xuanxue shi*, 27; and Gao Chenyang 高晨陽, *Ru Dao huitong yu Zhengshi xuanxue* 儒道會通與正始玄學 (Ji'nan: Qi-Lu, 2000), chapter 7.
14. *Shishuo xinyu*, 4.17, commentary by Liu Jun 劉峻 (462–521), citing the *Wenshi zhuan* 文士傳 (Biographies of Literati); see Yang Yong 楊勇, *Shishuo xinyu jiaojian* 世說新語校箋 (Taipei: Zhengwen, 1992), 158, n. 2. Cf. *Jin shu* 晉書 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1982), 50.1396, biography of Yu Ai 庾敳.
15. On this point, see Tang Yijie 湯一介, *Guo Xiang yu Wei-Jin xuanxue* 郭象與魏晉玄學 (Wuhan: Hubei renmin, 1983).
16. Xi Kang's "Sheng wu aile lun" and Zhong Hui's 鍾會 (225–264) treatise on four views of the root relationship between capacity and nature ("Caixing siben" 才性四本), according to Wang Sengqian 王僧虔 (426–485), were standard fare for debaters during the Southern Qi dynasty; see *Nan Qi shu* 南齊書, 33.598.

17. According to *Shishuo xinyu*, 4.21, "when Chancellor Wang Tao [Wang Dao 王導] emigrated south of the Yangtze River, he conversed on only three topics: 'Musical Sounds Are Without Sorrow or Joy' (*Sheng wu ai-lo* [Sheng wu aile]), "Nourishment of Life" (*Yang-sheng*), and 'Words Fully Express Meanings' (*Yen chin-i* [*Yan jinyi* 言盡意]), and nothing else." As translated in Richard Mather, *Shih-shuo Hsin-yü: A New Account of Tales of the World*, 102; cf. Yang Yong *Shishuo xinyu jiaojian*, 162.
18. For a general introduction, see Barbara Hendrischke, "Early Daoist Movements," in *Daoism Handbook*, ed. Livia Kohn (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 134–64.
19. See the studies by Isabelle Robinet on the "Shangqing—Highest Clarity" and Yamada Toshiaki on "The Lingbao School" in *Daoism Handbook*, 196–224 and 225–55, respectively.
20. See Tang Yongtong, *Han Wei liang-Jin Nanbeichao Fojiao shi* 漢魏兩晉南北朝佛教史 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1983), part 1.
21. Zong-qi Cai's study on Liu Xie has been mentioned earlier. In addition, the companion volume also features the following: David R. Knechtges, "Court Culture in the Late Eastern Han: The Case of the Hongdu Gate School"; Jui-lung Su, "The Patterns and Changes of Literary Patronage in the Han and Wei"; Michael Nylan, "Wandering in the Ruins: The *Shuijing zhu* Reconsidered"; and Daniel Hsieh, "Fox as Trickster in Early Medieval China."

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1

Sage Nature and the Logic of Namelessness

Reconstructing He Yan's Explication of Dao

Alan K. L. Chan

There is little question that the concept of *wu* 無, variously translated as "nothing," "nonbeing," and "negativity," is central to the early medieval Chinese intellectual enterprise. Famously, the *Jin shu* 晉書 (History of the Jin dynasty [265–420]) relates that during the Zhengshi 正始 reign period (240–249) of the Wei dynasty (220–265), He Yan 何晏 (d. 249), Wang Bi 王弼 (226–249), and others established the view, on the basis of their interpretation of the *Laozi* 老子 and the *Zhuangzi* 莊子, that all beings "have their roots in *wu*" (以無為本).[1] In this context, the concept of *wu* serves to bring out the meaning of Dao, which according to the *Laozi* can only be described as utterly profound and impenetrable, and in that sense "dark" or "mysterious" (*xuan* 玄), especially in that it remains "nameless" despite the fact that it is the "beginning" and "mother" of all phenomena.[2] The new sound of the Zhengshi era, to borrow a phrase from the fifth-century work *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語, soon gained currency, which later scholars aptly labeled "inquiry into the profound" or "learning of the mysterious Dao" (*xuanxue* 玄學) and which captured the imagination of the educated elite well into the sixth century.[3]

The Wei-Jin rendition of *wu* is often presented as an "ontological" breakthrough, against earlier "cosmological" accounts that trace the origins of beings to the transformation of vital "energies" or "pneumas" (*qi* 氣).[4] As a general characterization, the accent on ontology is useful because it highlights a key concern in early medieval Chinese thinking. Nevertheless, this does not render the meaning of *wu* explicit. Moreover, it should not be assumed that ontology was the only concern or that *xuanxue* was a monolithic movement. Metaphysics

and cosmology served a practical end, weaving an integral discourse with ethics and politics—*wu* not only "originates things" (*kaiwu* 開物) but also "completes affairs" (*chengwu* 成務), as the *Jin shu* goes on to say in its review of Zhengshi learning—and there was considerable disagreement among proponents of *xuanxue* on a variety of issues, such as hermeneutics and law. The concept of *wu* may have provided a point of departure, but it generated competing analyses of order, at least partly as a response to the perceived decline of the rule of Dao in an age of pronounced disunity after the demise of the Han empire (206 BCE–220 CE).

At the ethical level, the "nothingness" of Dao brought new questions that forced open the critical space that had been filled by Confucian traditions. Does *wu* annihilate Confucian virtues or can it subsume them under its mysterious fold? Can "nothingness" be realized or "embodied" (*ti* 體) in one's being, and what does "embodying *wu*" (*tiwu* 體無) mean? Does it signal radical transcendence and thus a mystical state, or should it be understood metaphorically as pointing to a mode of being characterized by deep insight into the nature of things and a heightened spirituality? While any answer rests on a prior understanding of *wu*, to He Yan, Wang Bi, and most of their contemporaries, it is also inseparably linked to a conception of the nature of the "sage" (*shengren* 聖人), the human exemplar represented especially by Confucius. This is because only a sage can realize Dao completely in his being and action. Indeed, the entire project of order hinges on this; but is it the case that the sage is able to realize Dao because of his special inborn nature, or does "sagehood" follow from embodying *wu*? Related to this, as we shall see, is the often cited but easily misunderstood debate between He Yan and Wang Bi on the place of the "emotions" (*qing* 情) in the nature of the sage. As an ethical ideal, embodying *wu* naturally finds expression also in "nonaction" (*wuwei*無為), which likewise forms a part of the mystery of Dao and thus requires explication.

Wei-Jin intellectuals shared similar concerns and a basic philosophical vocabulary. Overlaps in their approaches to the establishment and maintenance of order are to be expected, but they do not amount to uniformity. Rather, especially given the value placed on analytic rigor in "pure conversation" (*qingtan* 清談), the predominant intellectual activity of the time, what one should be able to find is internal coherence for particular conceptions of the mystery of Dao. In what follows, I examine He Yan's understanding of Dao as *wu*, and the ethical landscape that develops from it. The evidence available is meager, and one will have to look beyond He Yan to search for clues, but what

can be gathered seems to reflect a coherent argument that centers on a particular construal of the "nameless" as "harmony," which applies equally to the Dao and the sage. Following from this, as we shall see, He Yan could not but conclude that embodying *wu* was not a genuine ethical option for the "common" or "average" person. This provoked a sharp response from Wang Bi, for whom embodying *wu* was pivotal to the quest for sagehood. I will consider briefly the disagreement between them later in this discussion, so as to bring out a sense of the vibrancy of Zhengshi learning and the unfolding of *xuanxue*.

Dao and the Nameless

He Yan died accused of crimes against the state and perhaps for that reason most of his writings did not survive.[5] While he was undoubtedly a leader of the early Wei elite, his exact contributions to the intellectual scene cannot be reconstructed with full confidence. As is well known, the Eastern Jin (317–420) scholar Zhang Zhan 張湛 quoted twice from He Yan in his commentary on the *Liezi* 列子.[6] The two quotations were taken from He Yan's "Discourse on Dao" ("Dao lun" 道論) and "Discourse on the Nameless" ("Wuming lun" 無名論). Though relatively short, they are demanding and have been read in different ways. In the former, He Yan writes:

> Beings depend on *wu* in coming into existence, in becoming what they are. Affairs on account of *wu* come to fruition and become what they are. Now, one tries to speak about *wu*, but no words could describe it; name it, but it has no name; look at it, but it does not have any form; listen to it, but it does not give any sound. Then, indeed, it is clear that the Dao is complete. Thus, it can bring forth sounds and echoes; generate *qi*-energies and things; establish form and spirit; and illuminate light and shadows. What is dark obtains its blackness from it; what is plain obtains its whiteness from it. The carpenter's square is able to make a square because of it; the compass is able to make a circle because of it. The round and the square obtain their form, but that which gives them their form itself does not have any form. The white and the black obtain their name, but that which gives them their name itself does not have any name.
> 有之為有, 恃無以生。事而為事, 由無以成。夫道之而無語, 名之而無名, 視之而無形, 聽之而無聲, 則道之全焉。故能昭音響而出氣物, 包形神而章光影。玄以之黑, 素以之白, 矩以之方, 規以之圓。圓方得形, 而此無形, 白黑得名, 而此無名也。[7]

The "Discourse on the Nameless" is longer and provides a succinct definition of Dao. For ease of reference, I divide the text into twelve sections. In the translation below, my primary concern is to try to draw out the structure of He Yan's argument.

1. Acclaimed by the people, [things and affairs] then have a certain name. Without such acclaim, they do not have any such name.
   為民所譽，則有名者也。無譽，無名者也。
2. In the case of the sage, however, he assigns a name to what is nameless and assigns acclaim to what is without acclaim. He says the nameless is "Dao" and that which does not have acclaim is "great."
   若夫聖人，名無名，譽無譽。謂無名為道，無譽為大。[8]
3. Then, what is nameless can be said to have a name, and what is without acclaim can be said to have acclaim.
   則夫無名者，可以言有名矣。無譽者，可以言有譽矣。
4. But, are they used in the same way as [the names and social recognition attached to] phenomena that can be acclaimed and named? [That is, in assigning a name to the nameless, is the sage saying that it is the same as objects with definite properties that can be praised and named? The implication is that this cannot be the case, as the argument below will demonstrate.]
   然與夫可譽可名者豈同用哉？
5. This is analogous to the way in which an entity that does not have anything [i.e., definite properties] is invariably thus [assigned a name as] an entity that has definite properties. [That is, we can describe an entity that does not have any definite properties only in terms of objects that have such properties—literally, "something" (*you*). However, this does not entail that the former is of the same category as the latter, as the next two sections will show.]
   此比於無所有，故皆有所有矣。
6. Although [the nameless is mediated by the world of ordinary language and things and is in this sense] in the midst of entities that have definite properties, in principle it still belongs to the category of entities that do not have any such properties and is basically different from entities that have definite properties.
   而於有所有之中，當與無所有相從，而與夫有所有者不同。
7. Things of the same kind resonate with each other no matter how far apart; things of different kinds always run counter to each other no matter how near. This may be likened to [the relationship between yin and yang phenomena, in which] the yin in the midst of yang and the yang in the midst of yin will each seek out and follow their own kind. Summer days are a yang phenomenon; yet the summer night [despite

being in the same season as—and hence "near"—the summer day] and the winter day far away belong together to the category of yin. Winter days are a yin phenomenon; yet the winter dawn and the summer day far away are both in the same yang category. Both are different from what is near to them and the same as what is far from them. If we understand fully why they are different in the one case and the same in the other, then we will recognize [the truth of] the discourse on the nameless [presented here].
同類無遠而相應，異類無近而不相違。[9]譬如陰中之陽，陽中之陰，各以物類自相求從。夏日為陽，而夕夜遠與冬日共為陰。冬日為陰，而朝晝遠與夏日同為陽。皆異於近而同於遠也。詳此異同，而後無名之論可知矣。

8. Now, what was the reason that brought this about [i.e., why did the sage assign the name "Dao" to the nameless]?
凡所以至於此者何哉？
9. The Dao refers precisely to that which does not have anything. From the conception of the universe, [what we can name and perceive] are only objects with definite properties. That [the sage] nonetheless speaks of it [i.e., the nameless] as Dao is due to the fact that phenomena are able to function with regularity [as if traveling back and forth on a roadway, because of the Dao's] not having any definite properties.
夫道者，惟無所有者也。自天地已來皆有所有矣，然猶謂之道者，以 能復用無所有也。
10. Thus, although [the Dao] dwells in the realm of names, its nameless image remains submerged, in the same way that a distant [yin] substance is [buried deep] within a body of yang and we forget that it has other yin kinds far away. [That is, in view of the analysis presented in sections 5–7 above, although the Dao operates in the world of nameable objects, it remains categorically distinct but hidden, and its true namelessness is easily overlooked or misunderstood. A yin presence remains what it is, despite the fact it is embedded in a predominantly yang domain.]
故雖處有名之域，而沒其無名之象，由以在陽之遠體，而忘其自有陰之遠類也。
11. Xiahou Xuan [209–254] said, "Heaven and earth operate in accordance with what is naturally of itself so. The sage functions in accordance with what is naturally of itself so."
夏侯玄曰:「天地以自然運，聖人以自然用。」
12. What is naturally of itself so is the Dao. The Dao is fundamentally nameless. Thus, Laozi said that he only forced himself to assign a name to it [*Laozi*, chapter 25]. Confucius praised the sage-king Yao as "far-reaching, [whose beneficent accomplishment] no one could name"

> [*Lunyu* 論語 8.19]. Later in the same passage, he said that Yao was toweringly majestic in his accomplishment. In this instance, he was forcing himself to give Yao a name, taking a term that is commonly recognized by everyone in the world and applying it to Yao. How could it be otherwise that Yao's accomplishment had a name and Confucius still maintained that no one could name it? Precisely because Yao's accomplishment is nameless, one can therefore justifiably choose from all the names in the world to name it. But is that really its name? This should be sufficient to make clear [the nature of the nameless]; if anyone still fails to comprehend this, it would be like someone who sees the loftiness of Mount Tai but says that the original *qi*-energy is not vast and overflowing.
> 自然者，道也。道本無名。故老氏曰彊為之名。仲尼稱堯蕩蕩無能名焉。下云巍巍成功。[10] 則彊為之名，取世所知而稱耳。豈有名而更當云無能名焉者邪？夫唯無名，故可得遍以天下之名名之。然豈其名也哉？惟此足喻而終莫悟，是觀泰山崇崛而謂元氣不浩芒者也。[11]

The Language of *Wu*

From the surviving fragments of He Yan's two "Discourses," three related ideas of particular philosophic interest may be delineated. First, the Dao is "that which does not have anything." Second, the Dao is nameless and complete. Whereas the "Discourse on the Nameless" takes pains to distinguish the nameless Dao from beings, even though one has to rely on ordinary language to approach it, the "Discourse on Dao" connects the Dao's namelessness with its being complete. Third, beings depend on *wu* in coming into existence, which defines what they are. These, of course, need to be explained; but, first, a linguistic point may be in order.

The Dao is that which "does not have anything" (*wu suo you* 無所有). Is "*wu suo you*" a technical term? According to one translator, the phrase should be taken to mean that the Dao "has nothing that it has"; to another, He Yan is saying that the Dao "never possesses anything."[12] The construction "*wu suo* x" is common in early medieval Chinese literature. The "*suo*" in this construction functions as a grammatical marker, which combines with "x," usually a verb, to form a noun phrase, the object of *wu*; but generally it does not appear to be semantically significant.[13] For example, He Yan's commentary to *Lunyu* 15.8 reads: "[智者] 所言皆是，故無所失者也."[14] Suppose we shorten the second clause to "故無失者也," that is, removing "*suo*" after "*wu*," we would still be reading it in the sense of "therefore [the wise] do

not miss." Similarly, He Yan's commentary to *Lunyu* 4.10 contains the phrase, "[君子] 無所貪慕也"—"there is nothing that [the *junzi*] covets or envies." The same interpretation should hold if the phrase reads "無貪慕也" instead. In Wang Bi's commentary to the *Laozi*, the people are said to be "無所欲求": "They do not desire or strive after anything."[15] If objects of desire are not displayed, Wang Bi also says, then "there is nothing that will disturb the hearts or minds [of the people]" (心無所亂).[16] In these instances also, the presence of "*suo*" does not seriously affect interpretation. In short, "*wu suo you*" here seems to reflect stylistic interest rather than technical philosophical usage or, as one scholar has suggested, Buddhist influence.[17]

In He Yan's definition, the sense in which the Dao is said to "have nothing" remains unclear. Generally, beings (*you* 有) are characterized by definite properties such as form and name. This is a baseline interpretation that should apply to all Wei-Jin thinkers. As such, "*wu suo you*" would mean that the Dao does not have any definite, discernible, or nameable properties. This explains the translation above. Still, it is difficult to pinpoint the meaning of *wu*. Is the Dao so defined because it is something that exists but cannot be described, in which case one may translate *wu* as "nothingness," or does *wu* signify ontological absence or negation, an abstract "nonbeing" transcending the domain of beings altogether? Moreover, is the concept of *wu* primarily concerned with cosmogony, or does it suggest also a continuing relationship with beings? The *Liezi* evokes the concept of "great change" (*taiyi* 太易), which marks the absolute "beginning" prior to the birth of the cosmos where *qi* is not yet "seen" or manifest (*wei jian qi* 未見氣), and which Zhang Zhan likens to the "great ultimate" (*taiji* 太極) of the *Yijing* 易經 and the "undifferentiated and complete" (*huncheng* 渾成) Dao in the *Laozi*.[18] The term "great change" appears also in several Han works. In one of these, the influential scholar Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200) explains, "Great change means *wu*."[19] Leaving aside the provenance of the concept, is this similar to what He Yan meant by "*wu suo you*"?

On the one hand, for reasons to be explained below, most likely He Yan is suggesting that the Dao refers to an unfathomable "energy" source that eludes sensory perception, a mysterious something, as it were, of which nothing can be said but which gives rise to the transformation of the yin and yang *qi*-energies. Although the Dao does not have phenomenal attributes, it is nonetheless an ontological presence, on which beings depend in becoming what they are. In this respect, He Yan probably would not object to a concept such as "great change" in an account of the cosmogonic process. But, on the other

hand, He Yan did not offer an account of the cosmogonic process. Of greater concern seems to be the continuing presence of Dao in the workings of nature, which the concept of *wu* can help to illuminate. In other words, it may be assumed that the language of *wu* was introduced for a reason. However, this need not imply that there is something wrong with the established cosmological picture. In He Yan's case, I suspect the point is not to provide a new explanation of the origins of beings; rather, it is to bring to light the practical dimension of the unfathomable Dao. Important clues in this regard can be gathered from He Yan's understanding of "human nature" (*xing* 性)—taking the term "*xing*," which can refer to the nature of things as well, in its narrower sense here—and particularly that of the sage.

The Dictates of *Qi*

Commenting on *Lunyu* 5.13, in which the disciple Zi Gong 子貢 shared that Confucius's view on *xing* could not be heard, He Yan explains that "nature is that which human beings receive and which enables them to live" (性者人之所受以生者也). This must be interpreted in the light of the then prevalent belief that being is constituted by *qi*-energies. At the most basic level, this means that *qi* makes life possible. Further, human beings are born with certain "capacities" (*cai* 才), which can be traced to their individual *qi* constitution or endowment. One's *qi*-endowment may be "thick" or "thin," to use a stock phrase of the period, which encompasses both qualitative and quantitative measures. This determines one's capacity, be it physical, intellectual, emotional, or moral, and this is what is meant by one's inborn "nature" (*xing*). Put differently, reflections on "life" (*sheng* 生) move readily from sheer biological existence to *xing*, *sheng* with definite content, understood as capacity arising from the natural allotment of *qi*-energies that each person receives ultimately from the energy source that has come to be named, in a rough and ready manner, "Dao."

The concept of *qi*, of course, has a long history; suffice it to say that He Yan seems to have accepted some version of it. In the *Lunyu* (15.29), Confucius declared that it is human beings who can broaden the Dao and not the other way round. Often, this is taken to be a clear expression of Confucian "humanism." As He Yan understands it, however, this means: "For those whose capacity is large, Dao follows as large; for those whose capacity is small, Dao follows as small. Thus [Confucius concludes that the Dao] cannot broaden [the capacity of] human beings" (材大者道隨大，材小者道隨小，故不能弘人也). In this

context, "Dao" should refer to the extent of one's achievement, namely, the end result of putting one's capacity to proper use. Some may challenge He Yan's interpretation; but the point remains that this reading would not be meaningful unless one assumes that Dao is understood in terms of *qi* and that it is *qi* that determines one's nature, defined as substance, material, or stuff (*zhi* 質), or more precisely in view of its measurability and functionality, capacity. Determined at birth by one's *qi*-allotment, capacity cannot be altered. This has important ethical implications, which will be considered later.

Once it is recognized that He Yan operated from a *qi*-based conceptual framework, a coherent picture of Dao begins to form. The concept of "nothingness" proves useful because it can bring out the different senses in which the Dao acts as the "roots" of beings. As the source of vital *qi*-energies, nonmanifest and undifferentiated, it is indeed "*wu suo you*" in that it does not have any discernible characteristics. At the same time, as the source of nature and capacity, the Dao represents a deep ontological presence within each being. Whereas concepts such as "great change" or "original energy" (*yuanqi* 元氣) tend to privilege the role of Dao as the "beginning" of things, the concept of *wu* seeks to do justice also to its pervasive influence, literally an inflow of *qi* that informs individual nature.

The *Jin shu* account of Zhengshi learning referred to earlier also explains that *wu* is that which the yin and yang *qi*-energies depend on in their creative transformation, that which all beings depend on in acquiring their form, and that which the morally worthy depend on in acquiring their virtuous character (陰陽恃以化生, 萬物恃以成形, 賢者恃以成德).[20] This suggests that the author had similarly understood *wu* in terms of *qi*. There is speculation that the *Jin shu* may be quoting from He Yan here. In any case, the suggestion is that He Yan considered nature and capacity to be determined by *qi*. During the Zhengshi era, there was in fact intense debate on the relationship between capacity and nature. The debate precisely centered on whether capacity was inborn, or whether it was the product of learning and repeated practice. Four main views had been reported—that nature and capacity are "identical" (*tong* 同), that they are "different" (*yi* 異), that they "converge" or "coincide" (*he* 合), and that they "diverge" (*li* 離) from each other.[21] It would be surprising if He Yan was not aware of them or that he was unconcerned with the subject. Although there is no record of where he stood on the matter, he would have supported the identity or convergence of capacity and nature, that is, the first or the third position, for they both take capacity to be essentially inborn.

Sage Nature

Of particular interest to the present discussion is that this would commit He Yan to the view that "sage nature" is inborn. And this clarifies further the sense in which the Dao is said to have "nothing." Twice in his commentary to the *Lunyu* (14.35 and 16.8), He Yan follows the *Yijing* in asserting that "the virtuous character of the sage merges with that of heaven and earth" (聖人與天地合其德). This may mean something specific to its original audience, but now little can be inferred from it other than the sage's exalted status. The pervasive influence of *qi* would make this kind of "merging" possible, but this does not quite tell us what characterizes the nature of the sage. It seems reasonable to assume that sage nature is defined by an exceedingly rich, fine, and abundant *qi*-endowment, which translates into optimal capacity on all fronts. Is the sage, then, a superhero who can accomplish anything? Liu Shao 劉邵, He Yan's senior contemporary, discusses the nature of the sage in his *Renwu zhi* 人物志 (An Account of Human Capacities), which may shed light on this question.

According to Liu Shao, all living things are constituted by the "primordial one" (*yuanyi* 元一), that is, original, undifferentiated *qi*-energy. Individual nature is formed by the endowment of a specific measure of the yin and yang *qi*-energies. This endowment then generates a particular configuration of the "five agents" or "phases" (*wuxing* 五行), which gives shape to the human being (凡有血氣者, 莫不含元一以為質, 稟陰陽以立性, 體五行而著形) and brings about different capacities and capacity of varying strengths, which in turn account for different inborn capabilities (人材不同, 能各有異 . . . 能出於材, 材不同量).[22]

Thus, typically human nature consists of partial and limited capacities (*piancai* 偏材), which cannot be changed (偏材之性, 不可移轉), although learning may enhance capacity to some extent.[23] For most people, Liu Shao suggests, a particular capacity will dominate and influence the rest (偏至之材, 以勝體為質者也),[24] perhaps not unlike the way in which a strong ingredient—i.e., given sufficient purity and quantity—would overwhelm the other flavors, say, in a soup. Certain individuals may be blessed with a combination of strengths; for example, Liu Bang 劉邦, the founder of the Han dynasty, commands both superior intelligence (*ying* 英) and courage (*xiong* 雄).[25] Nevertheless, this still pales in comparison with the sage, whose nature is categorically different from that of ordinary individuals.

The sage is endowed with a nature that is a perfect blend of the finest qualities, according to the *Renwu zhi*. This is fundamentally different

from persons with specific capacities, who may be gifted in some ways but given the balancing movement of yin and yang are inevitably deficient in corresponding respects. For example, just as the summer day is long and the summer night is correspondingly short, some may be generous and forgiving due to a preponderance of compassion in their *qi*-endowed nature, but short on discrimination or tough-mindedness. The scientific merit of this kind of speculation is not the issue; what needs to be clarified is the logical structure of a view of human nature grounded in a theory of *qi*. Sage nature is by definition the highest and the most excellent. But this does not necessarily mean that the sage can be both, say, forgiving and unforgiving in the manner of a mystical coincidence of opposites. Perhaps the *Laozi* or the *Zhuangzi* contains elements of mysticism; but that, too, is not the issue. Rather, the point is more simply that for Liu Shao, and I would argue for He Yan also, certain entailments follow from the premise that nature is constituted by the blending of the yin and yang *qi*-energies.

On that premise, it is not exceptional strengths in particular areas but "harmony" (*zhonghe* 中和) that defines excellence in human nature and capacity (凡人之質量, 中和最貴).[26] To Liu Shao, this is also the essence of the Confucian doctrine of the "mean" (*zhongyong* 中庸), which characterizes the nature of the sage (中庸也者, 聖人之目也).[27] In the *Lunyu* (6.29), as is well known, Confucius praises *zhongyong* as the height of "virtue" (*de* 德).[28] According to Liu Shao, Confucius made use of the concept of *zhongyong* especially to mark the special character of the sage (歎中庸以殊聖人之德).[29] Given the assumption that moral and all other accomplishments are fundamentally derived from one's *qi*-endowed nature, "virtue" (*de* 德) is a matter of inborn character, what one has received or "obtained" (*de* 得) from the Dao, as commentators often play on the homonymic relation of the two Chinese words. He Yan did not mention the nature or character of the sage in his commentary on *Lunyu* 6.29, although he similarly defined *zhongyong* in terms of "harmony": "*yong* means constancy; [*zhongyong* refers to] virtue [in one's nature] that is harmonious and which can be put constantly into practice" (庸, 常也。中和可常行之德也).

Assuming for the moment that He Yan agreed with Liu Shao, what does harmony entail in this context? Harmonious nature, Liu Shao explains, does not dazzle but on the contrary is "necessarily plain and bland" (中和之質, 必平淡無味).[30] This seems peculiar. In a Confucian world, one might expect benevolence, filial devotion, or ritual propriety to enjoy some pride of place. Perhaps Liu Shao was thinking of Laozi's point that the Dao is "bland and without flavor" (chapter 35) and that

the sage "savors that which does not have any taste" (chapter 63). However, little is explained by simply saying that early Wei thinkers made use of "Daoism" to interpret "Confucianism." The question remains: Why harmony and why must it be bland?

The assertion that sage nature is "necessarily" plain indicates a logical point. If it were of a particular "flavor," it would be "partial" (*pian* 偏) and in that sense imperfect, and thus unable to bring about the kind of perfect harmony that is envisioned here. If it were of a particular "taste," no matter how powerful, it would not be able to serve up the "five tastes," that is, the basis of all flavors. Because the character of *zhongyong* is not of any particular flavor, it can only be described as "flavorless." As Liu Shao affirms, "The character of harmony—its substance does not have any name" (中庸之德, 其質無名).[31] This is evidently analogous to the Dao's namelessness. In this way, the concept of harmony connects sage nature with the "nothingness" of Dao and provides a coherent explanation of both.

Many scholars have called attention to the "correlative" nature of the Chinese worldview, in which human phenomena are seen to mirror affairs of the cosmos. In a world constituted and regulated by *qi*-energies, the possibility of microcosmic-macrocosmic correspondence is assured. The important hermeneutical point here is that the same logic should guide intellectual discourse at all levels—not only cosmology, but also ontology and ethics. From this perspective, nature-capacity at its finest should reflect the pristine state of the Dao; that is to say, "undifferentiated and complete." In this sense one may interpret He Yan's claim that the virtuous character of the sage merges with that of heaven and earth. From He Yan's "Discourse on Dao," it is clear that the Dao is able to accomplish its creative function by virtue of its completeness (*quan* 全). Precisely because it is complete, it is nameless. This reflects the same logic as what we find in Liu Shao's account of sage nature.

Sages and Emotions

In reconstructing He Yan's contribution to the Zhengshi philosophic scene, one can assume that his audience would be familiar with the assertion that the Dao is nameless. The question is why and in what sense is the Dao nameless? To some, no doubt, this is a mystery; but He Yan seems to be arguing that the namelessness of Dao is not mysterious at all but follows logically from its completeness, which in turn is entailed by its capacity to bring forth all phenomena in a balanced and ordered whole. Put another way, that beings arise from Dao is not in dispute. The point that needs to be made clear is that

only the undifferentiated and complete can conceivably engender and sustain the plenitude and order of nature. Because the wellspring of *qi* is undifferentiated and complete, one cannot single out any particular feature that would allow a name to be attached to it. Laozi and other sages of old called it "Dao." Brilliant as the choice may be, this does not mask its intrinsic namelessness.

So understood, it is equally clear that the Dao is not "empty" or ontologically void but on the contrary harbors the fullness of *qi*, containing within itself all possibilities of being. There is little danger, in fact, that the Dao would be misunderstood as abstract "nonbeing" lacking in substance; rather, because it informs all phenomena and can be approached only via ordinary language, the real worry for He Yan is that it may be confused with objects or beings with definite properties. Like a deep yin presence hidden within an overwhelmingly yang entity, as he puts it, the "roots" of being may be obscured. For this reason, one surmises, He Yan finds it necessary to devote an entire treatise to explaining the nature of the nameless. Interestingly, during the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) Yan Fu 嚴復 (1853–1921) took from Western philosophy the concept of *summum genus* to describe the Dao in the *Laozi*.[32] It is generally unhelpful to try to explain one difficult and contested concept with another. Nonetheless, this may be of heuristic value in that it contrasts with attempts at describing the Dao as sui generis, which in severing the link between the Dao and phenomena tends to bias toward radical transcendence and mysticism. Under He Yan's conceptual frame, Dao seems decidedly concrete, although it remains without predicates in the sense explained above.

At the ontological level, the fullness of Dao is mirrored in the nature of the sage. He Yan is famous for his "highly cogent" view that "the sage does not experience pleasure and anger, or sorrow and joy" (何晏以為聖人無喜怒哀樂, 其論甚精).[33] In most discussions of early medieval Chinese philosophy, this is taken to mean that for He Yan the sage "does not have emotions" (*wuqing* 無情). This warrants closer examination.

The concept of *qing* marks out the affective dimension of *xing*. This seems to have been established since the Warring States period. The *Xunzi* 荀子, for example, testifies that "nature's likes and dislikes, pleasure and anger, sorrow and joy are what is meant by *qing*" (性之好惡喜怒哀樂謂之情).[34] The *Li ji* (Book of Rites) makes a similar point, albeit with a different sorting of the emotions: "What is meant by human *qing*? Pleasure, anger, sorrow, fear, love, aversion, and desire—these seven are what a human being is naturally capable of without having to acquire through learning" (何謂人情？喜怒哀懼愛惡欲。七者弗學而能).[35] Some of the recently discovered Guodian bamboo texts make

clear also that *qing* denotes the emotions, which form an essential part of one's *qi*-endowed nature; for example, the *Xing zi ming chu* 性自命出 states: "The *qi* of pleasure, anger, sorrow and grief is *xing*" (喜怒哀悲之氣, 性也).[36]

There is no reason to believe that He Yan had a different understanding of the concept of *qing*. Emotion is a basic capacity and is activated when a human subject interacts with phenomena. To be pleased, for example, one has to like and want certain things. When that desire is met, one experiences pleasure as the heart (*xin* 心) rouses with satisfaction; if not, the *qi*-energies stir in the opposite direction and one becomes upset, displeased, and angry. Perhaps *qing* should be defined more precisely as affective-cognitive dispositions, since the *xin*, often translated as "heart-mind," functions integrally and emotional experiences obviously have cognitive references as well. Still, as far as He Yan is concerned, is he simply saying that sage nature is devoid of *qing*, in the sense that it lacks the capacity to generate emotions?

The emphasis on completeness would seem to rule out this interpretation. It is also unlikely that the issue turns on the absence of contact with the external world. Rather, just as the sage's harmonious nature is necessarily "bland," its being whole and complete does not admit of partiality in the form of differentiated affective-cognitive manifestations. In other words, the issue is not that the sage lacks anything, but that the capacity of the sage cannot be broken into parts. At one point in the *Renwu zhi*, Liu Shao describes sage nature rather curiously as like being "salty but without the acrid taste of saltiness" (鹹而不鹻).[37] This may be a rhetorical point to highlight the sage's perfection, but it also makes an important distinction.

Sage nature is unified substantively; it is not a set of specific qualities. This should not be collapsed into a distinction between the latent and the manifest. The *Zhongyong*, to be sure, distinguishes what is "central" (*zhong* 中) from its "harmonious" (*he* 和) expression. Whereas the former refers to an inner state prior to the arousal of "pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy" (喜怒哀樂之未發謂之中), the latter depicts the flawless performance of the emotions in due measure and always appropriate to the situation (發而皆中節謂之和).[38] Without prejudging the meaning of the *Zhongyong*, if this is taken to mean that the emotions are already fully differentiated before they arise, then a different view of sage nature than what I am ascribing to He Yan would follow. A quality—for example, the "hotness" of chili pepper produced by its constituent capsaicinoids—may stay dormant until it is actually tasted; but this is not the same as a nature that is fundamentally "bland" and unified,

which translates into impartiality both within and without. Whereas the "five tastes" are individually formed, following the reasoning in He Yan's "Discourse on Dao," the nameless Dao that forms them is not. There is a functional aspect to this, for just as the Dao's "blandness" gives rise to the five tastes, the undifferentiated completeness of the sage enables the "five emotions" to flourish in harmony. I will come back to this point later.

Like the Dao's original state, the sage is thus not "empty." Although he does not experience pleasure and anger, he is not in a constant mystical state, like a stony "pillar," as it were, devoid of affective capacity. The *Shishuo xinyu* (4.57) reports a conversation between Wang Xiu 王脩 (334–357) and the Buddhist monk Sengyi 僧意:

> Sengyi asked Wang Xiu, "Does the sage have emotions or not?" Wang replied, "He does not." Sengyi asked again, "Is the sage, then, like a pillar?" Wang said, "Like a set of counting rods—although they do not have emotions, their operation generates emotions (among the people)."
> 意謂王曰：「聖人有情不?」王曰：「無。」重問曰：「聖人如柱邪?」王曰：「如籌算, 雖無情, 運之者有情。」

I leave aside Wang Xiu's precise point; a more literal and less charitable interpretation might take his final reply to mean that the person who operates the counting rods has emotions, which would put him in a self-contradiction, if we take the sage as the subject, or set him up for the obvious rebuttal: "Who, then, manipulates the sage?"[39] There is also no need to see him as a follower of He Yan. What is of interest is that his response reflects the concern that *wuqing* should not be seen as total nihilistic absence, which may raise doubt about the sage's effectiveness in the ethical arena.

Wang Bi disagreed with He Yan on the nature of the sage. According to Wang Bi, it is not the case that the sage does not experience specific emotions.

> The sage surpasses the common people in his spirit-like perspicacity, but he is the same as everyone in having the five emotions. Because of his rich spirit-like perspicacity, he is able to embody harmony and thus to reach the state of not having anything [such as self-interest or partiality that would negate harmony]. Because he shares the same five emotions, he cannot but have sorrow and joy in response to phenomena. However, although the affective capacity of the sage

> responds to things, it is not burdened by them. Now, if in view of the fact that the sage is not burdened by things, one concludes that he does not respond to them at all, then, indeed, one far misses the mark.[40]
> 聖人茂於人者神明也，同於人者五情也。神明茂，故能體沖和以通無。五情同，故不能無哀樂以應物。然則聖人之情，應物而無累於物者也。今以其無累，便謂不復應物，失之多矣。

Wang Bi, I think, recognizes that the sage embodies harmony and that "nothingness" should be understood in terms of harmony on He Yan's view.[41] The disagreement between them may go beyond a blunt opposition between the absence and presence of emotions in the nature of the sage.

He Yan's argument, we recall, builds on the assumption that the sage enjoys a special inborn nature. To challenge He Yan, one could argue that fully differentiated attributes, affective and otherwise, are already present in the sage's inborn nature. One could appeal to Mencius, for example, to show that the innate seeds of benevolence and rightness are distinct. Indeed, if the body is constituted by the five agents or phases, there is a sense that the five emotions should form part of the original blueprint. The argument is not unattractive, but it would upset the perceived symmetry between the Dao and the special case of the sage. The Dao's namelessness precludes specificity; once we admit partiality, we surrender completeness. Another approach, without compromising the "nothingness" of Dao, may be to question He Yan's assumption that sagehood is strictly defined by an exceptional sage nature, categorically distinct from the nature of the common people.

The sage differs from ordinary individuals in his superior "spirit-like perspicacity" (*shenming* 神明), according to Wang Bi. If we follow He Yan's conception of sage nature, *shenming* would suggest an uncommonly strong and pure *qi* formation, rendering the sage godlike. In Wang Bi's argument, *shenming* seems to convey the profound clarity of the sage's "heart-mind." In the former case, *shenming* describes one aspect of the sage's incomparable nature and capacity. In the latter case, regardless of its precise meaning, it is an ideal to be recovered or attained. This is what I think Wang Bi was getting at. Inborn nature does not exclude specific qualities. It may also admit differences due to the varying strength of individual *qi*-endowment.[42] But such differences do not preclude the possibility of attaining *shenming* and therefore sagehood. Having attained *shenming*, which at a minimum should yield deep insight into the nature of things and a heightened spirituality, the

sage is thus able to cry and laugh with the world without being enslaved by the web of desire that corrupts the order of nature.

Wang Bi's argument calls to mind Zhuangzi's idea, or more precisely one strand of thought in the *Zhuangzi*, that *wuqing* simply means that "likes" and "dislikes" have no power over the sage and thus would not form a burden (*lei* 累) that ties down the heart-mind and harms his being.[43] But, this is not the place to pursue Wang Bi's philosophy of human nature.[44] His critique reinforces the point that for He Yan the pervasive influence of *qi* is decisive in determining nature and capacity. As far as the sage is concerned, he is nothing like ordinary men and women. Liu Shao also recognizes the essential divide between the sage and the common people—compared with those who possess specific qualities, he says, the sage's harmonious nature "differs in kind" (中庸之質, 異於此類).[45] This implies that unlike differences in degree which may be overcome, the extraordinary *qi*-endowment of the sage amounts to an insurmountable difference. In other words, one cannot become a sage through learning or other means; one is either born a sage or not, although learning remains instrumental to those who are not born sages. During the third century, there was debate on the religious front about whether one could become an "immortal" (*xian* 仙). Xi Kang 嵇康 (223–262), for example, is well known for his view that immortals are born with a specially endowed nature, which reflects the same assumption that underlies He Yan's conception of the sage.[46] In contrast, Wang Bi seems to counter that sagehood is attainable. The ethical and political implications of He Yan's view must now be considered.

Embodying Nothingness and Nonaction

In He Yan's understanding, only the sage can be said to embody "nothingness" in the sense that he is born with a harmonious nature that is undifferentiated and complete. For the common people, their partiality sets clear limits on their possible achievements. Thus, on Confucius's call to "set one's mind on Dao" (*Lunyu* 7.6: 志於道), He Yan explains: "Setting one's mind on something means to aspire toward it. The Dao cannot be embodied; thus, one can only set one's mind after it" (志, 慕也。道不可體, 故志之而已). No doubt, aspiration may entail earnest steps to emulate the sage; indeed, an officer ought to set his mind on Dao and not to seek comfort (commentary to *Lunyu* 14.2: 士當志道不求安). Nevertheless, the point remains that for He Yan embodying *wu* is a matter of "destiny" (*ming* 命) and not a genuine ethical option.[47] Wang Bi also indicates that "Dao cannot be embodied" (道不可體)

in his commentary to *Lunyu* 7.6.[48] The reason is that "Dao" is but a designation of *wu*, and by definition *wu* does not have any "body" or concrete shape (*wuti* 無體). This does not necessarily contradict Wang Bi's better-known claim that "the sage embodies nonbeing" (聖人體無).[49] While any attempt at reifying Dao is inadmissible, realizing *wu* at the ethical level presents a different proposition. Although a detailed explanation cannot be entertained here, for Wang Bi it should be possible to attain sagely illumination and authenticity.[50]

In any event, He Yan's view of the sage seems clear. In the *Lunyu* (6.23), Confucius remarks that "the benevolent person finds the mountains delightful" (仁者樂山). He Yan's commentary reads, "The benevolent person delights in being calm and secure like a mountain. True to his nature, he is unmoving [i.e., his heart remains still, unaffected by external influences]; and the myriad things and affairs flourish and take their course" (仁者樂如山之安固, 自然不動, 而萬物生焉). Although the *Lunyu* speaks of the person of benevolence, the language of He Yan's commentary suggests the sage, focusing on his "constant" nature. In the same *Lunyu* passage, Confucius observes further that the benevolent person is "tranquil" and "lives long." He is able to live long because "his nature is tranquil" (*xingjing* 性靜), and he is tranquil because "he has no desires" (*wuyu* 無欲), according to the two Han scholars cited by He Yan in his commentary here. Embodying the fullness of Dao, the sage is always calm, impartial, and impervious to the vagaries of changing circumstances.

One could highlight the profound being of the sage in other ways—for example, that he is completely sincere (*Lunyu* 9.8 commentary) or that his teachings and wisdom are inexhaustible (*Lunyu* 9.11 commentary). One could also speak of the sage figuratively as assisting heaven and earth in their constant production and transformation. However, these additional tributes do not affect the structure of He Yan's argument, which is that the sage in virtue of his harmonious nature can bring about the ideal reign of "great peace" (*taiping* 太平). Obviously, the sage cannot literally create the "five emotions" and the "five tastes" in phenomena; no matter how well endowed his nature might be, he could not, for example, stop an earthquake or make rain. Nevertheless, the sage can ensure that the people are protected from earthquakes and droughts; that is to say, to effect human flourishing through good government. This situates the discussion of sage nature firmly on political ground.

As Xiahou Xuan has noted, sagely governance consists in following what is "naturally of itself so" (*ziran* 自然), which is to say without artificially intervening in the order of nature. In a general sense, this

defines the politics of "nonaction" (*wuwei* 無為). Perhaps there was a degree of common understanding among third-century literati as to what *wuwei* meant in practice. For example, it should be apparent that the sage would not treasure goods that are difficult to obtain, delight in warfare, or brag about his achievements. The net result also seems clear—the sage-ruler establishes and maintains an environment that enables the people to enjoy the "five tastes" and the "five emotions" in harmony; namely, to live in peace and plenty, and to realize their capacity fully. This is the functional aspect of sage nature mentioned earlier. Still, the concept of *wuwei* is not self-explanatory. Some may argue, for example, that *wuwei* is not so much about not doing certain things, as doing things in a spirit that accords with the order of nature. At the political level, from "nonaction" to "great peace" leaves a significant hermeneutical gap that needs to be filled. Does *wuwei*, for example, entail that rituals and learning are not only ineffective but also detrimental to the project of order?

To He Yan, consistent with his view of sage nature, *wuwei* in politics means fundamentally that the sage is able to put together an optimal government, like a well-prepared soup with all the right ingredients working smoothly together and yielding harmonious flavors. Beyond the culinary metaphor, this presupposes that the ideal ruler is able to identify the right talent and appoint them to the right office. The sage-king Shun 舜, according to Confucius, governed with perfect "nonaction" (*Lunyu* 15.5). It is possible that Shun was able to transform the people with his magnificent virtue so that they became effectively self-governing, as Zhu Xi 朱熹, for example, has suggested;[51] but for He Yan what Confucius meant in this instance was that "in the appointment of officials, Shun always had the right people, and thus without action [i.e., without involving himself directly in the specific tasks of government] he effected order" (言任官得其人，故無為而治也).

In negotiating through the "profound," whether with respect to politics or ontology, the same reasoning should apply. The sage-ruler's completeness is logically necessary, for if he were only good at certain things, he would be unable to identify the different kinds and gradations of capacity, appoint the best people to specific offices with different requirements, and oversee the complex operations of the phenomenal world. However, while there is little doubt that the sage can realize "great peace," is it the case that the sage *alone* can accomplish this? This was a controversial issue at the time. Eminent figures such as Zhong You 鍾繇 (d. 230) and Wang Can 王粲 (d. 217) wrote on the subject and argued that "only sages could bring about great peace" (非聖人不能致太平). Sima Lang司馬朗 (d. 217), elder brother of Sima Yi

司馬懿, who sent He Yan to his death in 249, disagreed: "Although men [of worth] like Yi Yin [of the Shang dynasty] and Yan Yuan were not sages, if their way were to carry on [i.e., implemented in government] for several generations, then great peace could be attained" (伊、顏之徒雖非聖人,使得數世相承, 太平可致).[52] He Yan did hold Yan Yuan, Confucius's cherished disciple, in the highest regard, but given his conception of sage nature he would be committed to affirming that only sages could reestablish the pristine rule of Dao. If "lesser" individuals could also bring this about, the special inborn nature of the sage would seem irrelevant. If this is true, there are further implications.

Naturally, sages are extremely rare; "the way of the sage is difficult to accomplish," as He Yan's *Lunyu* commentary explicitly states (18.2: 聖道難成; cf. 4.8, 7.26). This effectively removes from the political equation any likelihood of having a sage-ruler for the present. Sage nature is inborn, and sages alone can bring about perfect order. If it is unlikely that a sage will arise, what options are left for the political philosopher? Although sagehood is ultimately beyond reach, following in the footsteps of the sage and in that sense "setting one's mind on Dao" should present an attractive alternative. What can one hope to achieve in emulating the sage? Yan Yuan, whom He Yan describes as being "close to the way of the sage" (*Lunyu* commentary 11.19), sets the standard in this regard. He Yan writes:

> Generally, human beings live by their emotions [allowing them to dictate their actions], and their pleasure and anger deviate from the norm. Yan Yuan lived by the Dao; his anger was never excessive . . . [but] accorded with what was due . . . . When he realized that he was in the wrong, he never failed to mend his ways [as Confucius said of him in the *Yijing*, *Xici* 繫辭, part A] (commentary to *Lunyu* 6.3).
> 凡人任情, 喜怒違理。顏淵任道, 怒不過分 ... 怒當其理 ... 有不善, 未嘗復行也。

In principle, this establishes an ethical ideal. However, He Yan acknowledged that Yan Yuan was substantially superior to the other disciples of Confucius (e.g., commentary to *Lunyu* 6.7, 9.20) and consequently that few could be expected to reach his level of excellence. In the eyes of He Yan, then, Yan Yuan probably also amounted to a special case. This would agree with the idea that inborn nature and capacity cannot be altered. Learning is important, but there are limits as to what it can accomplish. Although the people may be taught the way of the sage, as Liu Shao explains, the dominant trait in their

nature will take over when it is fully developed and displace what they have been taught (雖教之以學, 材成而隨之以失).[53] On its own, this is not a particularly strong argument. Nature may be inborn, but there is insufficient reason to assert that learning and practice cannot significantly improve capacity. Xi Kang, for example, stresses the benefit of spiritual practice even though one cannot learn to become an "immortal." Nonetheless, there is a second consideration. Once the sage is elevated to unreachable heights, a separate class seems necessary to distinguish the select few or "elite" from the "common people." He Yan seems to have thought highly of himself, hinting that "spirit-like" (*shen*) may not be an inappropriate epithet for him.[54] As an argument, this carries no weight; but adding the two points together, one gets the impression that near-sages such as Yan Yuan are also the product of an exceptionally rich *qi*-endowment.

He Yan's assessment of Yan Yuan cited above refers to certain principles or norms (*li* 理). Perhaps he was referring to principles inherent in the cosmos that can serve as a guide to both ethical and political action. He Yan also suggests elsewhere that there is "order" to the "way of the good" (commentary to *Lunyu* 2.16: 善道有統; cf. 15.3). However, regardless of their precise reference, the issue is how do we ensure that these norms and principles are maintained? Who should be entrusted with the specific tasks of government? How should the people be governed? Judging from He Yan's account of nature and sage nature, I think we can assume that he would support a form of government by the elite. These are individuals, such as Yan Yuan, who by virtue of their superior *qi*-endowment would have the requisite integrity and ability to govern the people well. There should not be any undue worry that superior capacity may escape detection, for the substance of one's nature is discernible, just as pleasure and anger, for example, leave visible traces. The ability to recognize greatness is itself a hallmark of greatness. Though difficult, the expert would be able to identify talent, as many then believed, especially by looking into a person's eyes.[55]

The processes of official recruitment and appointment need to be formalized. He Yan has emphasized the importance of "selecting [good] people" (擇人) and "removing redundant officials" (除無用之官) in his prose poem on the "Hall of Great Blessings" (景福殿賦), an early work completed in 232.[56] In a memorial to the throne in 247, he stresses also that the emperor "must select the right people" (必擇正人) to accompany him even at leisure.[57] Nevertheless, there is insufficient evidence to decide what kind of official recruitment and appointment system He Yan would favor. The issue is complicated by the fact that during the Zhengshi era

he headed the personnel secretariat in charge of civil appointments. While there was criticism that the secretariat was gaining too much power, there was also praise that excellent appointments were made under He Yan's watch.[58] The secretariat must be able to fulfill its responsibility in making official appointments, but perhaps he would agree also that recruitment should begin with local recommendations, following established practice.[59] Given that local recommendations would be made by the elite also, they should not threaten the integrity of the system.

Should the elite rely on moral suasion, rituals, and instructions in governing the people? Or, would it be more reasonable to guide the people by more forceful measures such as law? These positions are not mutually exclusive; but there is a sense that He Yan might be inclined toward the latter. This is because understanding the teachings of the sages requires a level of intelligence that may be beyond the common people. After all, Confucius himself has said, in He Yan's rendition, that the people may make use of the abundance of nature but they are unable to understand it.[60] In other words, though the sages provide a vision for the management of people and affairs, that vision needs to be translated into policies and laws to ensure proper implementation. The common people are an asset, but they can be a liability also. Precisely because they allow their emotions to dictate their actions, it is necessary to establish clear regulative parameters to ensure that the "five emotions" among the people do not become deviant or excessive. In realizing harmony, positive reinforcements such as rituals and learning play an important role; but, stronger medicines are necessary. This does not necessarily amount to a "legalist" position. What it shows is that the account of sage nature forces a reassessment of the ethical and political priorities. If the majority are limited in their nature and capacity, it would be irresponsible not to think of ways and means to keep them in check.

Concluding Remarks

It is unfortunate that He Yan's philosophy cannot be reconstructed more fully, for he played a critical role in initiating a new wave of interest in explicating the concept of Dao. The impact of He Yan's inquiry into the profound is felt not only in Wang Bi but also in the next generation of thinkers such as Pei Wei 裴頠 (267–300), whose famous essay "Homage to Being" ("Chongyou lun" 崇有論) picks up again the issue of the specificity of being, as opposed to the mere presence of being as it is often supposed.[61] Any new account of Dao should ideally possess greater explanatory power than its antecedents.

The concept of *wu* allows He Yan to make sense of the mystery of Dao—its namelessness as well as its practical application. It is certainly not meant to perpetuate that mystery. At the level of cosmology, there is little reason to suppose that He Yan rejected the then prevalent *qi* theory. Existing cosmological accounts do provide helpful insight into the processes of energy transformation that bring about the order of nature; the issue is whether they explain sufficiently the way in which the Dao continues to inform and guide phenomena.

Not unlike Meno in the Socratic dialogue, He Yan was concerned with the question "whether virtue is acquired by teaching or by practice; or if neither by teaching nor by practice, then whether it comes to man by nature, or in what other way?"[62] This defines the debate on the relationship between capacity and nature. The figure of the sage had by then become deeply embedded in the common intellectual frame, and He Yan seems keen to demonstrate how sage nature forms a bridge between the Dao and phenomena. Perhaps He Yan was thinking of Laozi's analogy that the sage is like an infant whose nature embodies "the full extent of harmony" (和之至) (ch. 55; also in *Zhuangzi* ch. 23); or, which is more likely, he was simply making connections among a range of sources that formed a common heritage for the educated elite at that time. Drawing inspiration from the *Yijing* and the *Lunyu*, He Yan seems convinced that a single "thread" runs through the best that tradition has to offer. This ensures consistency in the resultant intellectual fabric, weaving a more comprehensive picture of nature and capacity, of ontology and ethics. It would be inconsistent, for example, to argue that one could learn to become a sage and at the same time place negative reinforcements at the top of the political agenda. The emphasis on external control reflects a view of human nature that is partial and imperfect, as opposed to sage nature that is harmonious and complete. This further implies that, in the absence of a sage-ruler who alone can realize "great peace," government should rely on gifted individuals with strong inborn capacities in establishing robust processes leading to a just and ordered political environment.

In conceptualizing sagehood, if one proceeds with the assumption that the common people cannot quite be trusted, because by nature their actions are driven by self-interest, one would be particularly concerned with distinguishing the ideal sage from them. Logically, the sense in which sage nature must be harmonious and impartial thus seems quite compelling. Indeed, how can the sage be just like ordinary human beings, who require stringent control so that they do not transgress the bounds of decency and propriety? However, ironically, the completeness of the

sage also makes him inaccessible as an ethical ideal. It is difficult to visualize what the sage would do in situations that call for concrete moral responses. Although we can see that the sage, for example, would not experience anger, for no provocation would have any effect on him, what would he do, say, on seeing a child about to fall into a well? What does "nonaction" arising from his undifferentiated nature translate into in this instance? In a sense, He Yan need not be concerned with this, because the sage is not only inaccessible but also ethically irrelevant. All he needed to do was to demonstrate that the impartiality of the sage makes possible the flourishing of phenomena and that government should be left to near-sages such as Yan Yuan, whose superior *qi*-endowment is sufficient guarantee that they would act in the best interest of the people.

This is a coherent vision, it seems to me, but perhaps there is one problem that He Yan was unable to resolve. The problem has to do with the "humanity" of Confucius. As the sage par excellence, Confucius surely should not be troubled by the play of emotions. Yet, the *Lunyu* gives a vivid account of Confucius as a man with deep, heartfelt emotions in several instances. In fact, He Yan recognizes that Confucius was deeply saddened by the death of Yan Yuan (commentary to *Lunyu* 11.9–10). Later scholars such as Guo Xiang 郭象 (d. 312) might explain this away by saying that although Confucius displayed strong emotions over Yan Yuan's death, he was only identifying himself with the rest of humanity; deep down, as it were, he remained unmoved in his heart.[63] But He Yan did not make that move. Perhaps He Yan did not see Confucius as totally inaccessible; a fuller version of Yan Yuan, but not the kind of sage that is nameless and complete. After all, it took Confucius a full seventy years to reach the stage where he could follow his heart's desire without transgressing the norms of rightness and propriety.[64]

This is mere conjecture, of course. What is clear is that the concern about the emotive nature of the sage continues well beyond early medieval China. During the Song dynasty, for example, Cheng Hao 程顥 (1032–1085) scrutinized afresh the *qing* of the sage in his influential "Letter on stilling one's nature" (*Dingxing shu* 定性書).[65] In it, like He Yan, Wang Bi, and Guo Xiang before him, Cheng Hao sought to explain how the sage's *qing* enables the flourishing of phenomena and yet at the same time he is "without emotions" (*wuqing*). Some tension between sagely "transcendence" and "engagement," between the "divinity" and "humanity" of the sage, may be inevitable, unless one distinguishes conceptually the metaphysical realm of "principle" from the phenomenal world, as Zhu Xi has done. This is but another way of saying that Wei-Jin philosophy leaves an indelible mark on the history of Chinese thought and deserves our fullest attention.

Notes

1. *Jin shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1982), 43.1236.
2. See especially the *Laozi*, chapter 1. The word "*xuan*" also appears in chapters 6, 10, 15, 51, 56, and 65.
3. See, for example, *Shishuo xinyu* 4.22 and 8.51, in Yang Yong 楊勇, *Shishuo xinyu jiaojian* 世說新語校箋 (Taipei: Zhengwen, 1992), 163 and 339; cf. Richard Mather, trans., *Shih-shuo Hsin-yü: A New Account of Tales of the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), 103 and 226. On the establishment of *xuanxue* as a subject of official learning during the fifth century, see especially Wang Baoxuan 王葆玹, *Zhengshi xuanxue* 正始玄學 (Ji'nan: Qi-Lu, 1987), 2–7.
4. See especially Tang Yongtong 湯用彤, *Wei Jin xuanxue lungao* 魏晉玄學論稿, in *Tang Yongtong xueshu lunwenji* 湯用彤學術論文集 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1983), 233.
5. A grandson of the Han general He Jin 何進 (d. 189), He Yan was adopted by Cao Cao 曹操 (155–220) when the latter married He Yan's mother. He Yan's date of birth is sometimes given as 190 CE; but that would be the earliest possible date. The terminus ad quem would be 208. This is because He Yan's mother, then widowed, became a consort of Cao Cao between 198 and 208, and He Yan is known to have been in the Cao family when he was seven or eight. If one assumes that He Yan entered the house of Cao in 198 at the age of eight, he would have been born in 190. However, both Wang Baoxuan and Wang Xiaoyi 王曉毅, for different reasons, have argued persuasively that He Yan was likely born later, in 207. See Wang Baoxuan, *Zhengshi xuanxue*, 123–26, and Wang Xiaoyi, *Wang Bi pingzhuan* 王弼評傳 (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue, 1996), 43–46, 344–46. This would put He Yan much closer in age to his friends such as Xiahou Xuan 夏侯玄 (209–254). During the Zhengshi era, as is well known, He Yan was a close associate of Cao Shuang 曹爽 (d. 249), who controlled the Wei government and under whom He Yan directed the personnel secretariat, in charge of all civil appointments. In 249, both Cao Shuang and He Yan were put to death by Sima Yi 司馬懿 (179–251), when the latter emerged victorious in a power struggle that effectively ended the rule of the Cao family. For an account of He Yan's various writings, see Wang Baoxuan, *Zhengshi xuanxue*, 129–39, and Wang Xiaoyi, *Wang Bi pingzhuan*, 368–75. See also Yu Dunkang 余敦康, *He Yan Wang Bi xuanxue xintan* 何晏王弼玄學新探 (Ji'nan: Qi-Lu, 1991), 74–94.
6. See Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, *Liezi jishi* 列子集釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1985), 10–11 and 121.
7. Compare Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 324.
8. It is possible to read "若夫聖人，名無名" as "but in the case of the sage, his name is nameless." However, it seems grammatically preferable to take the first *ming* 名, the first *yu* 譽, and *wei* 謂 in this sentence as verbs. The main objective of section 2 is to set up the argument that the "Dao" remains nameless, although it is given a name by the sage. *Yu* 譽 may be more colloquially translated as "praise"; the more awkward "acclaim" here is meant to bring out the linguistic nature of such praise, as a claim made about something.
9. To render the two clauses symmetrical, it has been suggested that the word *bu* 不 should be added to the first, before "*xiang ying*" 相應 or the word

bu should be deleted from the second, before "*xiang wei*" 相違. But neither would affect interpretation significantly; the point remains that things of the same kind belong together though they may be far from each other, whereas things of different kinds remain distinct despite being near to each other.

10. He Yan's commentary on the *Lunyu* here cites the explanation of Bao Xian 苞咸, who takes the phrase "*dangdang*" 蕩蕩 to mean "far and wide" (*guangyuan* 廣遠): "Confucius was saying that Yao spread his beneficence far and wide." On the phrase "*weiwei*" 巍巍, He Yan explains that Yao's accomplishments are "lofty and great" (*gaoda weiwei* 高大巍巍). On He Yan's *Lunyu* commentary, see n. 14 below.
11. He Yan's "Wuming lun" has been translated by Rudolf Wagner, *Language, Ontology, and Political Philosophy in China: Wang Bi's Scholarly Exploration of the Dark (Xuanxue)* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 52–53; and Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, 324–25. It is possible that sections 11 and 12 form one quotation from Xiahou Xuan, and that it did not form a part of He Yan's work. This is how Wagner, for example, has taken it; see Wagner, *Language*, 50–51. Wang Baoxuan has argued that given He Yan's "pride," it is unlikely that he would quote from a contemporary; see his *Zhengshi xuanxue*, 24. In contrast, Wang Xiaoyi, *Wang Bi pingzhuan*, 130, agrees with the present arrangement. If we take He Yan's argument to be about language, section 12 would fit in with the earlier sections. Zhang Beibei 張蓓蓓, "Xiahou Xuan zongkao" 夏侯玄綜考, in *Wang Shumin xiansheng bashi shouqing lunwenji* 王叔岷先生八十壽慶論文集 (Taipei: Da'an, 1993), 596, makes the same point. As the text now stands, sections 1–7 read well together, culminating in the assertion that although the nameless is necessarily mediated by ordinary language, it remains distinct from entities with definite properties. The argument continues with section 10, which reaffirms that although *wu* operates in the world of beings and its true nature may be easily obscured, it remains categorically different from beings with names and definite properties. Section 9 suggests that, to He Yan, the word *Dao* conveys the sense of perpetual and smooth functioning of phenomena, perhaps "cyclical" if we think of natural phenomena such as the four seasons. Sections 11 and 12, finally, connect the theme of "naturalness" with that of namelessness.
12. See Wagner, *Language, Ontology, and Political Philosophy in China*, 53, and Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, 325, respectively.
13. See, for example, Wang Li 王力, *Gudai Hanyu* 古代漢語, revised edition (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2003), 365–70; and Yang Shuda 楊樹達, *Ciquan* 詞詮, *juan* 6 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1996), 92–94. I thank K. K. Luke, Nanyang Technological University and Yuet-keung Lo for help on this point.
14. Huang Kan 皇侃 (488–545), *Lunyu jijie yishu* 論語集解義疏, *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏 edition (Taipei: Shijie, 1963), 158. All quotations from He Yan's *Lunyu* commentary are from this edition. The numbering of the *Lunyu*, by which He Yan's commentary will be identified in subsequent quotations, follows that of Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, *Lunyu yizhu* 論語譯注 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1989). He Yan's *Lunyu jijie* is, of course, a collective effort, submitted to the throne jointly by He Yan and four other scholar-officials. On this point, see also the *Jin shu*, 33.993, biography of Zheng Chong 鄭沖. Most of the comments collected in it are assigned to specific commentators of the Han

period. Those comments not assigned to any commentator are generally recognized as reflecting the view of He Yan and his fellow co-compilers. There is little reason not to accept this. In particular, it has been observed that the commentators cited in the *Lunyu jijie* are all identified by their full name, except for Bao Xian 苞咸, who is identified only as Master Bao. The reason for this may be because He Yan's father is named He Xian, and as such the word "Xian" was deemed "taboo." On this point, see Wang Baoxuan, *Zhengshi xuanxue*, 134. On He Yan's *Lunyu* commentary, see also John Makeham, *Transmitters and Creators: Chinese Commentators and Commentaries on the Analects* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), chapter 1. Makeham's position is that "the unattributed commentaries were the work of the editors generally, even though any one of these commentaries may be the contribution of a particular editor" (29). In what follows, I refer to "He Yan's" commentaries on certain passages of the *Lunyu* not to suggest that he was necessarily the sole author of them, but for convenience. Nevertheless, I believe that they do support the argument that is developed in He Yan's two "Discourses."

15. Commentary on the *Laozi*, chapter 80; in Lou Yulie 樓宇烈, *Wang Bi ji jiaoshi* 王弼集校釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1980), 190.
16. Commentary to *Laozi*, chapter 3; in *Wang Bi ji jiaoshi*, 8.
17. This is the view of Wang Xiaoyi; see his *Wang Bi pingzhuan*, 133–41. The main argument is that the phrase "*wu suo you*" appears in a number of early Chinese Buddhist texts. However, there is little indication that He Yan was using it as a key technical phrase.
18. *Liezi jishi*, chapter 1, 6.
19. Zheng Xuan, commentary to the *Yiwei qiankun zaodu* 易緯乾坤鑿度. The Chinese text reads: "太易，無也。" See Yasui Kōzan 安居香山 and Nakamura Shōhachi 中村璋八, eds., *Jushu Isho shusei* 重修緯書集成, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Meitoku, 1981), 70. Compare Zheng Xuan's commentary to the *Yiwei qian zaodu* 易緯乾鑿度, in ibid., 24; this part of the *Yiwei qian zaodu* is substantially the same as the *Liezi* passage referred to in n. 18 above.
20. *Jin shu*, 43.1236. Zheng Xuan is also quoted to have said "[The term] nature conveys that human beings come into being on account of the blood and *qi* they received. [Thus,] there are those those who are wise and those who are foolish, and [those who are blessed with] good fortune and [those who meet with] bad fortune" (性謂人受血氣以生，有賢愚吉凶). See *Hou Han shu* 28A.960, Biography of Huan Tan, commentary.
21. I have examined this debate in a separate essay, "What are the 'Four Roots of Capacity and Nature'?" in *Wisdom in China and the West*, ed. Vincent Shen and Willard Oxtoby (Washington, DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2004), 143–84.
22. Liu Shao, *Renwu zhi*, *Congshu jicheng xinbian* 叢書集成新編 edition, vol. 20 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng, 1984), chapter 1, 443a and chapter 5, 446a.
23. Ibid., chapter 2, 444b. This may be contrasted with the view of the *Xunzi*, "Rong ru" 榮辱, "Capacity, nature, intelligence, and ability—[in these respects] the [noble] *junzi* and the [petty] small men are the same" (材性知能，君子小人一也). See *Xunzi zhuzi suoyin* 荀子逐字索引, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Institute of Chinese Studies, Ancient Chinese Texts Concordance Series (Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 1996), 14.

24. Ibid., chapter 1, 443b.
25. Ibid., chapter 8, 447c.
26. Ibid., chapter 1, 443a.
27. Ibid., chapter 1, 443c.
28. A similar saying is also found in the *Zhongyong*, chapter 3; see Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200), *Sishu zhangju jizhu* 四書章句集注 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1983), 19.
29. *Renwu zhi*, Preface, 441a.
30. Ibid., chapter 1, 443a.
31. Ibid., chapter 2, 443c.
32. Yan Fu, *Laozi Daodejing pingdian* 老子道德經評點 (Shanghai: Shangwu, 1935), commentary to *Laozi*, chapter 1.
33. *Sanguo zhi* 三國志 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1982), 28.795, n. 1.
34. *Xunzi*, chapter 22, "Zhengming" 正名; in *Xunzi zhuzi suoyin*, 107.
35. *Li ji*, chapter 9, "Liyun" 禮運; in Wang Meng'ou 王夢鷗, *Li ji jinzhu jinyi* 禮記今註今譯 (Taipei: Shangwu, 1984), 376.
36. See *Guodian Chumu zhujian* 郭店楚墓竹簡, edited by the Museum of Jingmen City (Beijing: Wenwu, 1998), 179; "*bei*" 悲 also conveys a sense of pity and indignation.
37. *Renwu zhi*, chapter 2, 443c. "*He*" 和, the most basic term that conveys a sense of "harmony," can be said to be a contested metaphor in early Chinese writings in that it was interpreted as both musical harmony and culinary perfection. The two operate on a different logic. Whereas musical harmony in early China presupposes a basic distinction between "superior" and "inferior" and marks out the boundary of morally and culturally acceptable sounds, and by extension thought and conduct, culinary harmony focuses on the blending of diverse and potentially conflicting elements into an integral whole. The logic of culinary harmony seems to guide He Yan's thinking. Famously, Confucius distinguishes harmony from sameness or unison (*Lunyu* 13.23: 和而不同). The underlying metaphor seems to be one of music. This is, for example, how Zhu Xi has understood it. However, as He Yan sees it, "The heart of the gentleman is harmonious, though they hold different views; thus the text says, 'not the same'. Ethically deficient men have the same tastes and likes, but they strive for their own benefit; thus the text says, 'not in harmony'" (君子心和，然其所見各異，故曰不同。小人所嗜好者同，然各爭其利，故曰不和也). The reference to "tastes and likes" seems to suggest a culinary metaphor, which bears on He Yan's conception of the sage. Yang Shuda 楊樹達, *Lunyu shuzheng* 論語疏證 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1986), 327–29, and Roger T. Ames and Henry Rosemont Jr., trans., *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1998), 254, n. 216 both provide useful references on the usage of *he* in ancient China. I have examined the concept of *he* in a separate article, "Harmony as a Contested Metaphor and Conceptions of Rightness (*Yi*) in Early Confucian Ethics," presented at the Conference on Ethics in Ancient China and Greco-Roman Antiquity, October 2007, Munich, Germany.
38. *Zhongyong*, chapter 1, in *Sishu zhangju jizhu*, 18.
39. Yang Yong, *Shishuo xinyu jiaojian*, 186. Compare Richard Mather's

translation, "He's like counting rods (*ch'ou-suan*) [*chousuan*]. Even though they themselves have no emotions, the one manipulating them does." See Mather, *Shih-shuo Hsin-yü*, 122. The text goes on to relate that Sengyi precisely countered, "In that case, who manipulates the sage?" Defeated, Wang Xiu left without saying another word. This last part of the conversation may be corrupt, as the commentator of the *Shishuo xinyu*, Liu Jun 劉峻 (462–521), pointed out; see Yang Yong, *Shishuo xinyu jiaojian*, 187, n. 3.

40. *Sanguo zhi*, 28.795, n. 1.
41. Wang Bi in fact recognizes that the nature of the sage is "harmonious" (*zhonghe*) and that it is characterized by "impartiality" (*wusi* 無私). See his *Lunyu shiyi* 論語釋疑 (Explaining the Doubtful Points in the *Lunyu*), in *Wang Bi ji jiaoshi*, 624–26, commentary on *Lunyu* 7.38 and 8.19, respectively.
42. Wang Bi acknowledges that *xing* may be "strong" (*nong* 濃) or "thin" (*bo* 薄), which can only be a reference to a person's inborn *qi*-endowment; see *Wang Bi ji jiaoshi*, 632, commentary on *Lunyu* 17.2.
43. See especially *Zhuangzi*, chapters 5 and 23; in Guo Qingfan 郭慶藩, *Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1985), 221 and 810. The *Zhuangzi* as it now stands contains two approaches to this subject; see my "Two Ethical Perspectives on the Emotions in the *Zhuangzi*," in *Zhuangzi: Ethics at Ease*, ed. Dennis Schilling and Richard King (Munich: Harrasowitz Verlag), forthcoming.
44. I have addressed this question separately in a comparative study of He Yan, Wang Bi, and Guo Xiang, "The Nature of the Sage and the Emotions: A Debate in Wei-Jin Philosophy Revisited," *Journal for Chinese Philosophy and Culture (Zhongguo zhexue yu wenhua xuekan* 中國哲學與文化學刊) 2 (2007): 196–226. See also Tze-ki Hon's discussion in this volume, which highlights Wang Bi's keen political insight especially in his commentary on the *Yijing.*
45. *Renwu zhi*, chapter 1, 443b.
46. On this point, see, for example, Mou Zongsan 牟宗三, *Caixing yu xuanli* 才性與玄理 (Taipei: Xuesheng, 1993), 323; and Xu Kangsheng 許抗生 et al., *Wei Jin xuanxue shi* 魏晉玄學史 (Xi'an: Shanxi shifan daxue, 1989), 219. On Xi Kang, see also Ulrike Middendorf's discussion in this volume. The name Xi Kang is pronounced Ji Kang in modern Chinese.
47. Compare He Yan's usage of the term *ming* in his commentary on *Lunyu* 7.17 and 9.1.
48. Or, "the Dao cannot form a body" (道不可為體), according to another edition; see *Wang Bi ji jiaoshi*, 624 and 635, n. 9.
49. *Sanguo zhi*, 28.795, n. 1.
50. See n. 44, above.
51. Zhu Xi, *Sishu zhangju jizhu*, 162.
52. *Sanguo zhi*, 15.468.
53. *Renwu zhi*, chapter 2, 444b.
54. *Sanguo zhi* 9.293, n. 1.
55. For example, see *Sanguo zhi*, 28.784, which relates that Jiang Ji 蔣濟 (d. 249) was particularly known for his ability to see "through" a person, as it were, to detect a person's capacity by looking at his eyes.
56. See Yan Kejun 嚴可均 (1762–1843), ed., *Quan Sanguo wen* 全三國文, in

his *Quan Shanggu Sandai Qin Han Sanguo Liuchao wen* 全上古三代秦漢三國六朝文 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1958), 1272b and 1273a, respectively. The translation "Hall of Great Blessings" is taken from David R. Knechtges, trans., *Wen xuan, or Selections of Refined Literature*, vol. 2 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 279. The two lines in question are found on 293, l. 213, and 303, l. 382.

57. *Sanguo zhi*, 4.122.
58. Fu Gu 傅嘏 (209–255), whom He Yan removed from office during the Zhengshi era, was a staunch critic of the alleged concentration of power at the personnel secretariat; see *Sanguo zhi*, 21.623. According to Fu Xian 傅咸 (239–294), He Yan was brilliant as director of the personnel secretariat; see *Jin shu*, 47.1328.
59. David Knechtges discusses the practice of official appointment in the Han in his contribution to the companion to this volume, *Interpretation and Literature in Early Medieval China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010).
60. Commentary to *Lunyu* 8.9; read in the light of Huang Kan's sub-commentary.
61. Pei Wei's essay is found in *Jin shu*, 35.1044–47. Pei begins by stating that the undifferentiated root of all things in their totality is "the Dao of ultimate origins" (宗極之道). Like He Yan, Pei Wei was not concerned with the opposition between "something" and "nothing," but rather with the relationship between phenomena with discernible characteristics and their undifferentiated, "harmonious" source. If this is true, Pei Wei's lost essay, the "Guiwu lun" 貴無論, "On Valuing Nothingness"—see *Sanguo zhi*, 23.673, n. 2—is unlikely to be about *wu* as abstract "nonbeing"; rather, it should complement the idea that beings arise from "something" undifferentiated and complete but of which "nothing" can be said.
62. Benjamin Jowett, trans., *The Dialogues of Plato*, vol. 1, 4th edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 265.
63. Commentary to *Lunyu* 11.10; as cited in Huang Kan, *Lunyu jijie yishu*, 109. Compare Guo Xiang's commentary to the *Zhuangzi*, chapter 3; *Zhuangzi jishi*, 127, n. 1.
64. *Lunyu* 2.4. He Yan's commentary here cites Ma Rong 馬融 (79–166), who explains that Confucius was able to follow what his heart desires without transgressing the "law" (*fa* 法) that governs the workings of the heart.
65. See *Song Yuan xue'an* 宋元學案, *juan* 13 (Taipei: Shijie, 1966), 319; cf. the slightly longer version in *Er Cheng ji* 二程集 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1981), 460. For a discussion, see my "Do Sages Have Emotions?" In *Confucian Ethics in Retrospect and Prospect*, eds. Vincent Shen and Kwong-loi Shun (Washington: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2008), 113–35; and "Affectivity and the Nature of the Sage: Gleanings from a Tang Daoist Master," *Journal of Daoist Studies* 3 (2010): 1–28.

2

Tracing the Dao

Wang Bi's Theory of Names

Jude Soo-Meng Chua

The third-century Chinese commentator of the *Laozi* 老子, Wang Bi 王弼 (226–249) is credited with being one of the founders of *xuanxue* 玄學 (Studies of the Profound). One of the most intriguing claims his acclaimed commentary makes is that the sage infers the Dao as the source of all things, starting from the names of objects. In this chapter, I argue that it is Wang Bi's correlative theory of language metaphorically integrated into his philosophical system that allows him to "infer" the form or actuality of a name through political reflection all the way to the Dao as its source.[1]

Correlative Semiotics

For Wang Bi, names (*ming* 名) correlate with its appropriate actuality. Coming up with a name is not a frivolous process. In his *Introduction to the Laozi* (*Laozi zhilüe* 老子指略), he presents explicitly the correlative theory of naming:

> All names arise from forms [phenomenal manifestations]; never has a form arisen from a name. Therefore if there is this name, there must be this form, and, if there is this form, there must be its separation [from all other forms]. If "benevolence" cannot be called "sagehood" or "intelligence" called "benevolence," each must have its own actuality.
> 凡名生於形，未有形生於名者也。故有此名必有此形，有此形必有其分。仁不得謂之聖, 智不得謂之仁, 則各有其實矣。[2]

Thus, for Wang Bi names are not *conventionally* determined, but are determined depending on the *shi* 實, the actuality, of things. On this basis he says that one cannot trade a name for another, since names have to accord with their actualities, and are determined based on these actualities. Again, names arise from the *xing* 形, the form, for "the name arises from how it appears to us."[3] So in effect for Wang Bi the *shi* is manifested through the *xing,* and the names are determined according to the *xing*. In a word, while names ultimately are dependent on the *shi*, the names are dependent more immediately on the *xing*. Hence, he can say that if there is this name, there must be this form, since the form is the source of the name. Names come from somewhere objective, and this somewhere is the form.

Wang's theory of language has many important philosophical and interpretive implications. Firstly, it explains how it is that the Dao is nameless. Since names follow upon the form, if something has no form or *xing*, it cannot be said to have a name. Now, the Dao, being phenomenally undetectable, has no form. And because the Dao is formless, it has no name. Thus, Wang comments on chapter 25 of the *Laozi* as follows:

> *Text*: We do not know its [Dao's] name.
> 吾不知其名
>
> *Commentary:* Names are used to determine forms; but amorphous and complete, it has no form, so we cannot make any such determination. Thus the text says, "We do not know its name."
> 名以定形, 混成无形, 不可得而定。故曰不知其名也。[4]

Secondly, as I will try to make clear, this correlative theory of names fits in very nicely with Wang's metaphorical reading of the text. It captures equivocally Wang's justification for his social-political doctrine of noninterference. Specifically, it is used to express his idea that promises of prestige do not encourage authentic moral character development.

It took me a while to notice how Wang explicitly reads the *ming-shi* 名實 semiotic as a metaphor, but when I saw it, it was just unmistakable. Metaphors are often employed as analogies to illuminate a complex or different idea, and they work precisely by not meaning what they do straightforwardly mean. Here, I am borrowing with modification from this ordinary sense of a "metaphor." By "metaphor," I do mean a phrase that is used to express a meaning that is quite different from

its straightforward meaning. However, the "metaphor" operates by signifying other possible *equivocal* meanings of the very same phrase. Specifically, this is done by exploiting the homographic (or indeed, homomorphic) quality of the phrase. An analogy of what I mean by a "metaphor" would be a gestalt painting, such as some of Salvador Dali's surrealist paintings which, with their same lines and strokes, convey two radically different images superimposed one on another.

Wang's *Introduction to the Laozi* often playfully reads the *ming-shi* semiotic as equivocal signifiers for his social doctrine that giving people titles of prestige to tempt good behavior does not cultivate the desired moral character: "All names arise from forms; never has a form arisen from a name."[5] For Wang, the word *ming* (names) means also prestige or reputation. *Xing* (form) in turn means more than just the physical shape or form. It refers also to the character of a person. Hence, Wang speaks at times of not using the law to cut people into shapes, that is, into the desired character. Thus, the talk of the form never arising from the name is a metaphor for the idea that good character can never be elicited by the offering of rewards of reputation or prestige.[6] That is, in this context, its important point is not merely semiotic, though it may appear to be so at first glance. Its other point is Wang's social and political doctrine of noninterference.

Consider, for example, the following passage on politics, which appears immediately and somewhat suddenly after a substantive explanation that names follow upon forms and not the other way around:

> If the virtues of honesty and the uncarved block are not given prominence but the splendors of reputation and conduct are instead publicized and exalted, one will cultivate that which can exalt him in hope of the praise involved and cultivate that which can lead to it in the expectation of the material advantage involved. Because of hope for praise and expectation of material advantage, he will conduct himself with diligence, but the more splendid the praise, the more he will thrust sincerity away, and the greater his material advantage, the more contentious he will be inclined to be. The heartfelt feelings that fathers, sons, older brothers, and younger brothers should have for one another will lose their authenticity. Obedience will not be grounded in sincerity, and kindness will not be grounded in actuality. All this is brought about by the publicizing of reputation and conduct.
> 夫敦樸之德不著，而名行之美顯尚, 則修其所尚而望其譽，修其所顯而冀其利。望譽冀利以勤其行, 名彌美而誠愈外, 利彌重而心愈競。父子兄弟, 懷情失直, 孝不任誠, 慈不任實, 蓋顯名行之所招也。[7]

Its sudden appearance after a discourse on semiotics appears disjointed and incoherent—at least, to the hermeneutically untutored eye. Yet there is in fact no "break," because this whole paragraph is completely captured by the metaphor of the "form never arising from the name." It is as if the author expects the reader to know that the discourse on names and forms would continue, only that it proceeds now in a very different sense. Here the "names" or prestige viz. the "publicizing of reputation and conduct" fails to give rise to the relevant "form" or desired moral character. And just as a name that exists without having arisen from a form will not be traceable to an actuality, so also someone who seeks and achieves a reputation or name for any moral character will have, ironically, not acquired the character; in fact, he will likely have lost it, if he had any of it to start with. For such a person, who may now have made himself a name for that certain moral trait, his moral trait would paradoxically not be traceable to its only true source, its actuality. And the implication is that since it did not arise from its only possible source or actuality, it cannot be authentic; it is bogus morality. Clearly, for Wang the discussion of names and forms or actualities is not merely about semiotics but really also a metaphor for the point that the offering of rewards of reputation and prestige will not bring about true moral goodness.[8]

Thirdly, and most significantly, the correlative theory of language makes possible the speculative task of the sage. The sage is described as an intellectual genius who is highly competent in drawing inferences. Now, since words have a corresponding reality, the sage can try to discover their meanings. Not as if: looking up in the dictionary. Rather: trying to grasp, or to infer what the realities are viz. some social or moral phenomena, where relevant. The effort is to try to move *from* the word, *in the direction toward* the reality which the word covers or signs.

Some inferences are rather elementary. Consider the following. A certain word has a corresponding meaning or referent. But any particular word (type)[9] is differentiated from another particular word (type). Since each word corresponds to its own particular actuality or reality or meaning, then for every two word (types), there will be also two different and distinct meanings or actualities. So the first task in getting to any one of these actualities is to avoid confusing them with another actuality. If someone mistakes a word (say, A) for another word (say, B), then inevitably he will seek wrongly the corresponding actuality or meaning. Suppose A corresponds to the actuality α and B corresponds to actuality β. He will mistake A for B, and say that the meaning of A is that of B. In this way, he will also take the corresponding actuality of A for the corresponding actuality of B. In other words, when seeking the

corresponding actuality of A, he will think that B is really A, and trace B's actuality to A, which means that he will affirm the actuality β to be that which corresponds to A, when in fact α corresponds to A. The short of this is that at the very least one has to be clear how each word is different from another and how each corresponding meaning is different from the other respectively corresponding meaning. So Wang explains:

> If one cannot distinguish among names, it is impossible to discuss principles with such a person. If one cannot determine how names apply, it is impossible to discuss actualities with him either. All names arise from forms; never has a form arisen from a name. Therefore if there is this name, there must be this form, and if there is this form, there must be its separation [from all other forms]. If "benevolence" cannot be called "sagehood" or "intelligence" called "benevolence," each must have its own actuality.
> 夫不能辯名, 則不可與言理。不能定名, 則不可與論實也。凡名生於形, 未有形生於名者也。故有此名必有此形, 有此形必有其分。仁不得謂之聖, 智不得謂之仁 , 則各有其實矣。[10]

But Wang goes farther. Not only is he interested in tracing accurately the meaning or actuality of a particular word, he presses farther in that same direction to seek the *ultimate causal source(s)* of the reality which the word signifies. Or at least this is what he seems to suggest. Thus, rather interestingly he adds,

> Discernment of the most minute indicates the ultimate of perspicacity. Discovering what lies completely hidden indicates the ultimate power of inference. Who can extend perspicacity to the ultimate, can this be other than the sage? One who can extend the power of inference to the ultimate, can this be other than the wise?
> 夫察見至微者, 明之極也。探射隱伏者, 慮之極也。能盡極明, 匪唯聖乎？ 能盡極慮, 匪為智乎？[11]

Parallel passages suggest that for Wang, this "ultimate" is the Dao. For example, Wang writes:

> [T]hose whose vision is limited to physical manifestations and [do] not reach the Dao . . . [will] feel anger at the words they find in [the *Laozi*]. If one wishes to determine what the original substance of things is, although they might be near, he must verify where they start far away. If one wishes to cast light on where things come from, although they might be perfectly obvious, he must trace the roots

> where they emerge out of the dark. Thus it is that one takes from what is outside heaven and earth [the Dao] to cast light on what is within phenomenal appearance and to cast light on what it means for lords and princes to be "the orphan" or "the widower." It is by thus tracing things back to the unity of the Dao that one makes clear where they all begin. Therefore let it be those whose scrutiny is limited to the nearby and does not reach the source from which all things flow, none will fail to regard its [the *Laozi*'s] words as absurd and think there is nothing in them.
> 故使見形而不及道者，莫不忿其言焉。夫欲定物之本者，則雖近而必自遠以證其始。夫欲名物之所由者， 則雖顯而必自幽以叙其本。故取天地之外，以明形骸之内，明侯王孤寡之義。而從道一以宣其始。故使察近而不及流统之原者, 莫不誕其言以為虛焉。[12]

In other words, what Wang seems to be proposing here is a philosophical enterprise that attempts to infer the causes of realities, and not just the reality or forms of names. He shifts the whole *ming-shi* discussion to a higher level by suggesting that the Daoist sage not only get the actualities of words right, but that he seek the deeper causal reality of this actuality. In this way Wang transforms what started out as a semiotic exercise of tracing the realities corresponding to the words into an experiment in ontology: tracing or inferring the *ultimate* ontological cause of these very realities. With this emphasis on tracing things to the Dao, which is also called the dark, the mysterious, or the profound (*xuan* 玄), Wang had sparked a new movement. As Alan Chan points out,

> [A]ccording to the *Wen-hsin tiao-lung* [*Wenxin diaolong*, *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*], Wang Pi [Wang Bi] and Ho Yen [He Yan] did not only spark new interests in the Taoist classics, but had in fact charted a new course in the intellectual landscape of third-century China. This is described in terms of a shift from the doctrine of "names and principles" (*ming-li* 名理) to that of "profound discourse" (*hsüan-lun* [*xuan lun*] 玄論).[13]

From Language to Metaphysics

It is this shift from a discourse on names and forms to a discourse in metaphysical profundities that marks Wang off as turning Daoist philosophy profound. We will now examine this shift and the relevant debates that surround this metaphysical reading of the *Laozi*.

We can start with a problematic. It is not easy to pin down what accounts for the "shift." How does the theory that "names arise only

from forms" inspire Wang with the idea that "one should trace that Dao as the source of all these names"? How is it that suddenly an interest in semiotic should spark off an interest in metaphysical speculation? Indeed, the precise philosophical connection between the correlative theory of names and the novel project of inferring the Dao as the ontological source of all things is not immediately clear. The connection does not seem to be that of a premise and its conclusion. The idea that "one can and ought to trace names to their forms" does not seem to me as self-evidently implying that "one can and ought to trace forms to the Dao." And Wang does not seem to have explained why the discussion of names and forms points him toward the metaphysical speculation of the Dao as the source of all things. And it would be hard to; nothing controversial in the discourse of names and forms seems to have required a resolution through the projected ontological speculation. Whether the Dao is the source of all things is of no consequence to the debate on name and forms. Rather, the reverse is true. The kind of semiotic one holds as correct determines the possibility or impossibility of ontological speculation. This means that while a primary interest in ontology would lead one to discuss semiotics, a primary interest in semiotics would not philosophically lead one to discuss metaphysical origins. Therefore, there seems to be a missing philosophical link between the interest in semiotics and the interest in ontology in the evolutionary progression of early medieval Daoist philosophy.

Perhaps the connection is not to be found in the subject matter, but in the sage. Wang does say that the sage is he who can trace or infer things and events to their ultimate source, the Dao. Still the question remains: Why in the history of Chinese philosophy should the sage (who is no doubt competent in such inferential speculations) suddenly want to apply his skills and competencies to ontological or metaphysical speculation? Why is it that suddenly the sage's domain of enquiry has shifted from semiotics to ontology or metaphysics?

One may credit this shift of interest to the *Laozi* text. One may want to point out that Wei-Jin intellectuals such as Wang found in the *Laozi* the reference to the Dao as the source of all things, and so were inspired to prove these claims. Rudolf Wagner seems to think this was the case:

> In Wang Bi's work . . . the classics, including the *Laozi*, have no intrinsic authority. They owe their authority to the fact that they, by implication or explicitly, dealt with the only relevant problem—the features of the "That-by-which"—and that their insights, whether spelled out or implied, could be proved by discursive philosophy in the form of commentary or *lun* to be arguably true. In this manner,

> they justified the story of these texts having been written by Sages or their close seconds.[14]

However this still begs the question. Why is it that the *Laozi* text was *interpreted* with this metaphysical slant? Why was it *read as* suggesting a metaphysical quest for the metaphysical Dao as the source of all things? Why was there this shift in the interpretation? Why was it that Wang Bi saw something new—a metaphysical claim that the Dao is the source of all things—in the text? What accounts for the shift from the interest in language to an investigation in metaphysics? Unless the *Laozi* is self-evident, we cannot say that Wang picked out the metaphysical interpretation just by staring at the text; more likely than not he would have had some interpretive orientation to start with. And the text, as Wagner admits, is not self-evident: "[Wang's] revolutionary turn to discursive philosophy thus comes as the claim to rediscover what was most clearly relevant and *most radically forgotten in the hallowed texts* handed down by tradition."[15]

Our questions here parallel some of Chad Hansen's worries[16] when he wonders if those who read into the *Laozi* a metaphysical discourse may have misread the text. At the center of these questions and worries is the abruptness of the transition in Chinese philosophical Daoism from some topic of longstanding interest to a rather novel examination of speculative metaphysics. For Hansen, it is the claimed shift from sociopolitical theorizing to metaphysics. For this present study of Wang Bi, it is the seeming shift from a discourse of names and forms to the discourse on metaphysical origins. Hansen's research can complement our study. The new interpretive veil that reads metaphysical research into the *Laozi* text stands in stark contrast to the traditional *political* reading of the *Laozi*. The traditional reading is centered not on the metaphysical/mystical Dao, but on the performance or pragmatic Dao. In Hansen's own recent words,

> I find little motivation in ancient Chinese concepts of background beliefs for the kind of universal-particular analysis characteristic of ancient Greek (and Indic) thought. While handy for us today in understanding what a *Dao* is, we are unlikely to find echoes of this metaphysical structure in Daoist writing from the classical period of Chinese thought. Thus, while we have no overt reason to reject this metaphysical analysis of the Dao, it departs from the conditions on a solution that we began with. Arguably, it is not what would occur to a Chinese thinker with the conceptual structure and philosophical agenda of ancient China.[17]

His warning calls us to rethink Wagner's suggestion that Wang Bi had read into the *Laozi* a proposal for metaphysical research. Given that the discourse of names and forms has always been tied up with political reflection, we can ask if it is safe to assume that Wang would so quickly read into the *Laozi* text a major research proposal in metaphysics rather than language and politics. So the shift from linguistic and political concerns to an interest in metaphysical speculation is still curious. It warrants some explanation of how the new interest has any connection with the old concerns, and why the old concerns seem to have fallen out of view.

Indeed, I have never seen any satisfactory explanation of how or why the shift occurred in Wang. No study has well explained how the correlative theory of names leads Wang to his idea that one ought to infer the Dao as the ontological source of all things. All that scholars so far have done is simply to assert, as a historical fact, that this sudden shift occurred.

This question is related to another, which is also pertinent and has to be addressed here. One can also ask how philosophically Wang goes about justifying the claim that the Dao is the source of all things. One might imagine that Wang would have some form of metaphysical argument in his commentary. And true enough, Wang has these statements to that effect. For example, in the opening lines of his *Introduction to the Laozi*, Wang writes, in Wagner's translation, "It is generally true with regard to that by which things are created—that (things) are necessarily created out of the 'featureless' / [and] that by which achievements are brought about—that (achievements) are necessarily based on the 'nameless'" (夫物之所以生, 功之所以成, 必生乎無形, 由乎無名). As Wagner explains,

> [I]n the center of Wang Bi's philosophic inquiry is the relationship between the "That-by-which" and the ten thousand kinds of entities. As the features of the latter, namely, "forms" and "names" are accessible to immediate cognition, while those of the "That-by-which" are not, Wang Bi infers from the verifiable structures of the ten thousand kinds of entities what the features of their "That-by-which" must be. His method is thus inductive.[18]

The problem with some of these "ontological arguments" is that they seem less intent on establishing the ontic existence of a Source called the Dao than they are in just highlighting some characteristic of the Dao similar to the myriad things or the way the sage orders the world. That is, Wang does not necessarily seem committed to a substantive metaphysical Dao; rather, the Dao seems merely posited to analogously

capture some concrete earthly, social, or political structure. The Dao seems less a being in reality, and more of an imaginary mind-map. Alan Chan's study in *Two Visions* brings this out well. His insightful studies of the "Dao as non-being (*wu* 無)", which develops A. C. Graham's analysis, are instructive:

> In Wang Pi's [Bi's] commentary on the *Laozi*, the term *wu* is used to describe the nature of Tao [Dao] . . . . As A. C. Graham points out, "When *yu* [*you*] and *wu* are used as nouns, a serious ambiguity arises; they may mean either '(there-)being' and '(there-)not-being' or 'something' and 'nothing'." The question . . . is whether *wu* can be taken [to be] . . . an *abstract* noun when it is applied to the Tao . . . . [A]s Graham writes, "Those who identify the Dao with *wu* mean primarily that it lacks form and other qualities, and . . . that it is not a thing which exists in the world." Wang Pi, according to Graham, is precisely one of those who exemplified this interpretation.[19]

Equivocating Metaphors Once More

In the discussion thus far, I have tried to surface the challenges of explaining how the shift from a discourse in language and names to a discourse on the Dao as the source of all things occurs. It is hard to grasp how there was the sudden and abrupt shift of interest and for that matter how the supposed inference toward the Dao could be demonstrated. At least, it will be hard as long as we are trying to find a *strictly philosophical (and metaphysical) inference* toward the Dao as the source of all things. And we will continue to be puzzled until we realize that Wang's commentarial reading is much more sophisticated than that. What do I mean? Recall how the preceding discussions have unveiled Wang's clever employment and play of equivocal meanings of words. If we are to make sense of how Wang's project of inferring the Dao is related to his theory of names, I suggest we have to interpret his intellectual project in the light of this.

My suggestion is that the shift from the correlative theory of names to the task of inferentially tracing the Dao as an ontological source is bridged by and only by Wang's metaphorical reading of the correlative semiotics. Recall that the correlative theory of names states that all names arise from forms, and that it is never the case that a form should arise from a name. Metaphorically, this is the *equivocal* parallel for the sociopolitical or ethical point that authentic moral character or forms

can never arise from lures of prestige as rewards for good behavior. In other words, what started off as a discourse in semiotics suddenly and equivocally becomes a completely different discussion on how authentic morality cannot be brought about. The point can be broadened. Lures of prestige and rewards for good behavior cannot bring about a political community of authentically moral citizens; rather, the opposite results. The country would be flooded, under these kinds of enticements, with hypocritical people.

The natural question that comes to mind would be, "Well, what then would bring about a political community filled with people of authentic morality?" The effort to seek or infer the cause of authentic morality leads to Wang's theory of a policy of noninterference as the best way to encourage morality. Since authentic morality cannot be encouraged with enticements of prestige as rewards (and Wang would add) or the implementation of a plenitude of punitive measures or the law to "cut people into shape," or any attempt to exemplify the moral forms since citizens will adopt these forms for inauthentic reasons, the best way to encourage the desirable political community composed of moral and well-behaved citizens is to avoid enticing people with prestige or *names* and to avoid shaping people morally through the use of the law or institutions exemplifying any moral *form* or characteristic. Hence, the best policy to adopt as a political leader is to be *nameless* (*wuming* 無名) and *formless* (*wuxing* 無形), respectively. In other words, the causal source of a desirable political community is a policy of *namelessness* (*wuming)* and *formlessness* (*wuxing*). The nameless and the formless becomes the source of the true forms and names.

Now, for the last time, make a literary paradigm shift. The "nameless and formless" has for the while referred to the political *policy* of namelessness and formlessness. But it can metaphorically and equivocally refer to the metaphysical source of all things, the Dao, which is also nameless and formless. Therefore, the trail of the source of the names and its form or actuality has ended on the nameless and formless Dao.

In other words, the "shift" is not strictly a philosophical one. It is a literary shift. By equivocating on the terms *forms* and *names*, the discussion moves over from semiotics to politics. And finally, by a further equivocation on the terms *namelessness* and *formlessness*, the discussion moves from politics to metaphysics. The "inferences" are hence not, strictly speaking, philosophical. There is a constant play and exploitation of the terms and their equivocations. Each equivocation facilitates the shifting transition from semiotics to politics to metaphysics. The intellectual journey from names to forms to the Dao is thus paved by

three different kinds of tiles: the *linguistic* names and forms; the *moral or political* names and forms; and finally the *ontologically* nameless and formless. When seen like this, the relevance of the correlative theory of names and forms becomes evident: it serves to usher in the political discussion of the doctrine of noninterference, which in turn will eventually lend itself to the discussion of the Dao as the source of all things.

Furthermore, the *inference* in the discovery of the Dao as the source of names and forms is really a political analysis, rather than a metaphysical analysis. At least, the central inference that moves from "names" and "forms" to the "Dao" is not an investigation in metaphysics. It is in the main a study in political governance: the causes and policy-origins of the desired society. It explains and sums up the strategy of namelessness and formlessness that effects the good society. This doctrine needs no metaphysical premise; it stands alone, justified by pragmatic political reflection. So the centerpiece of the inference to the Dao is really political reflection. This sits well with Hansen's study, which argued that the major interest in classical Chinese Daoism is political reflection. So also Wang's interpretation of the text as a research in political theory does not surprise us, precisely because Wang does not see the text in large part as a research in ontology. Consistent with the Hansenian theory of classical Daoist interpretive orientations, Wang's interpretive glasses see mostly political concerns.[20] It is only at the last stage where the equivocation on the terms *namelessness* and *formlessness* signifying the political strategy of nonintervention brings the discussion to a point where there is the reference to the Dao, the ontological source of all things, itself structurally formless and hence nameless.

Still, rather obviously there is a separate discourse on the metaphysical Dao, about which the political terms *namelessness* and *formlessness* equivocally signify. It would therefore be wrong to say that there is no metaphysical speculation on the Dao in Wang Bi. While Hansen's point that in philosophical Daoism political reflection remains dominant holds true for Wang, Hansen's playing down of metaphysical speculation of the Dao therefore cannot be unreservedly applied here. The way to see it is to recognize that there are two speculative inferences toward the Dao, and unless these two are sorted out, scholarship on *xuanxue* will be plagued with confusion.

There is firstly the inference that the Dao exists, period. This stands on its own and is not clearly related to the discourse on names and forms. Its basic line of thought is the naïve ontological claim that there must necessarily be a Source for all the things in the world, and since this Source is imperceptible, it is formless and hence nameless. Its premises have little to do with the correlative theory that names arise from

forms and never the other way around, or the political doctrine that character-forms cannot be effectively encouraged by promises of names and prestige. Wagner's scholarship correctly fleshed out the presence of this kind of inference in Wang's commentary.

The second "inference" is the one that moves from the discourse on names and forms, that shifts from that to political reflection and then finally to the Dao. Here, the shifts are facilitated by equivocating on the terms *names* and *forms*. This was explained above. My sense is that Alan Chan had noticed this second line of thought in Wang, and so was unwilling to reduce all of Wang's ontological speculation into a simplistic discourse in ontic-metaphysics, typical of the first form of inference. Therefore he was persuaded to suggest that Wang's discourse on the Dao as nonbeing (*wu*) was merely a heuristic devise to capture its metaphorical parallel, the political policy of namelessness and formlessness, and added further that the Dao though ontological was not ontic. But I hesitate to go along completely with Chan, since there seem on the other hand to be speculations on a causal origin. While there is nothing in Wang that necessarily implies any ontic Dao, nothing in Wang has explicitly excluded it. I cannot of course argue from ignorance; I cannot say the ontic Dao is in the text because I know of nothing that resists it. Just as well, Occam's razor is a double-edged sword; to interpret a text most economically need not always preserve the truth. If I must risk erring, I would so by giving Wang more credit. My inclination is to say that for Wang, some of his references of the Dao were aimed at articulating some ontically existent origin of the myriad things. I am also inclined to conclude this way because of Wang's treatment of his correlative theory of names. Even while the theory of names is employed metaphorically to capture his political doctrine of noninterference, he does take the correlative theory of names as an independently credible semiotic, and employs that in articulating how the formless Dao cannot be named. In other words, while he reads his linguistic speculations metaphorically, he does take them seriously on their own account. Therefore, it would seem consistent that Wang would treat his speculations on the Dao likewise. That is, Wang would read the nameless and formless Dao as a metaphor for the political strategy of nonintervention, but would nonetheless treat his metaphysical speculations on the nameless and formless Dao seriously and regard them as aiming at true metaphysical claims.

Now if this is the case, it may seem that compared with Wagner, Chan has overreached in the opposite direction, which is that he had tried to interpret all of Wang's metaphysical inferences as non-ontic ontological speculation and merely heuristic analogues to political doctrine. Yet the way to see how both Wagner and Chan are correct in

their own way is to realize that they had spotted each of the two lines of "metaphysical" thinking in Wang. For just as the first metaphysical and (I dare say) ontic discourse of the Dao exists, so also this second line of "metaphysical" speculation exists. But this second "metaphysical" speculation exists in a way that is not unconnected to the discourse on names and politics; it exists in addition to and together with the political reflection. Its principal purpose is not metaphysical enquiry; rather, this second line of "metaphysical" speculation is an artistic, creative, and literary way of metaphorically capturing a political doctrine of nameless and formless noninterference.[21]

It Goes Both Ways

We can test my interpretation. We can see how the shifts facilitated by the equivocation of terms such as *nameless(ness)* or *formless(ness)* creates a coherent and literarily beautiful reading of how knowledge of the Dao as the origin can inform the sage's political decisions.

After having "inferred" the Dao as the source of all things, Wang then requests that we move in the opposite direction. For: given that we have "traced" the Dao as the causal source of things and events, we are now in a position to infer the consequences of this. In this way, one moves from the Dao back to reality so as to judge how best to operate in the reality of the myriad things. In other words, having moved from present phenomenal realities (corresponding to names) back to the Dao as the primordial source of all things, one can understand how things arise. But now that one knows how things arise by means of the Dao, one can now in turn know how things will occur. This knowledge can guide the political theorist or the sage ruler.

Indeed, for him this is the entire message of the *Laozi*: knowing the Dao as the origin and how this information can guide political governance. In a very important passage, Wang sums up the above as the thread that runs through the *Laozi*:

> As a book, the *Laozi* can almost be completely covered by a single phrase: Ah! It does nothing more than encourage growth at the branch tips by enhancing the roots. [In other words,] observe where things come from, and follow them to where they inevitably return. In what one says, do not put the progenitor [the Dao] at a distance. In what one undertakes, do not neglect the sovereign [the Dao]. Although the text consists of five thousand words, there is a single unity that runs through all of them.

老子之書，其幾乎可一言以蔽之。噫！崇本息末而已矣。觀其所由，尋其所歸，言不遠宗，事不失主。文雖五千，貫之者一。[22]

If one is to read this in an unsophisticated manner, one would think of philosophically, perhaps inductively, inferring political precepts from one's knowledge of the Dao. If, however, we attend to the literary shifts that I have argued Wang constantly makes by exploiting the equivocations of the terms *formless(ness)* (*wuxing*) and *nameless(ness)* (*wuming*), a picture that is more credible and workable (I think!) emerges.

Recall that on my theory of Wang's reading, one moves from names and forms through to a reflection on the causes of some desired social behavior and then to the nameless and formless Dao. When one is able to do this, one can arrive at principles (*li*). For: one can take a desired social behavior, trace its source and, presumably, as Wang reads the *Laozi* as saying, end up with the Dao as its source. The desired social behavior Wang had in mind was moral and law-abiding behavior. How is the Dao the source of this behavior? Not in the sense of a metaphysical cause. Remember: the Dao qua nameless and formless equivocally signifies the strategy of "nameless" and "formless" noninterference. *This latter political strategy is the Source*. But it is also equivocally the "Dao," which is indeed metaphysically nameless and so formless. And now that one knows the "Dao" as the source of that social behavior, one knows what one should or should not do, since some things that one does would either assist that cause or hinder that cause. What should or should not be done, so to assist and not hinder that cause, then, is the (ordering) principle (*li*). This principle then becomes a useful prudential norm for guiding the sage-ruler or political governor, who may be interested in promoting the desirable social behavior.

Some of these prudential norms are analogously similar to how the Dao operates,[23] and so the principle gets extended to describe how in fact the Dao acts and relates to the myriad or "ten thousand" things. But more significantly, there are also the metaphorical and equivocal parallels. The final result is that we have principles such as "namelessness," "formlessness," "naturalness" (*ziran* 自然), and "no action" (*wuwei* 無為), which describe how the Dao operates in relation to the myriad things,[24] and *also* how the ruler or governor prudentially ought to deal with his myriad subjects. Hence, each principle signifies two related ideas: how the Dao works and orders the world, and how the sage-governor or ruler ought to prudentially operate to benefit society.[25] More poetically, the principles express analogously or metaphorically/equivocally the way

both of the Dao and of the Daoist sage. In a sense then, the principle of the "Dao" is a kind of exemplar, pattern, or paradigm[26] for the sage's mode of operation.

Again, to warn that one not put the Dao at a distance or not neglect the Dao is to ask that one constantly remember that the "Dao" is the source of all things, and when one keeps this fact in mind, one would be in the better position to know how to cooperate with the Dao's actions and not to hinder its causal activity. What does this mean? Is this merely saying that one should examine how the metaphysical Dao operates and mimic its processes? For the last time, no! The "Dao" here refers not to the metaphysical Dao, but to the "Nameless and Formless", that is, the political strategy of noninterference. At the bottom of it all, Wang Bi's *Laozi* is a still in the main a social science. It is a theory about how to best manage society, attentive to the causal sources of the desired social or political community, which traces causally ultimately to the nameless and formless political strategy, equivocally called the nameless and formless "Dao."

Conclusion

The riddle, I think, is solved. The right way to understand Wang Bi's commentarial reading of the *Laozi* is to see that some of Wang's speculations of the Dao as the source of all things do not always proceed logically. Wang's commentarial reading of the *Laozi* sews old interests neatly together with the new. The discourse on names and forms and the concern with politics is playfully strung up with the metaphysical discourse on the Dao. One need not logically imply the other; but there exists the literary connection. Each patchwork is joined together with the other with metaphorical bonds to form the picture of a quest that starts from names and forms and ends with the Dao. No doubt, analytically this patchwork is bound to tear where the "equivocal inferences" are. But precisely his employment of equivocation is what gives his reading of the *Laozi* its winning beauty. Wang Bi's aesthetic genius reminds us that philosophy is as much an art as it is a science of demonstration.

Notes

1. Sections of this essay were read earlier by Alan Chan, Robert Neville, David Wong, and Vincent Shen. I am grateful for their comments, which helped correct and improve my argument. Alan Chan deserves special mention; his careful reading saved me from many pitfalls. Indeed, his scholarship forms the foundation for the ideas developed in this paper. I was

also helped by comments on my paper by Tze-Ki Hon, David Knechtges, and Ulrike Middendorf, as well as other discussants at the International Conference on the World of Thought in Early Medieval China held at National University of Singapore in January 2006, where an earlier draft of this paper was read.

2. Wang Bi, *Laozi zhilüe* (*Introduction to the Laozi*), in Richard John Lynn, trans., *The Classic of the Way and Virtue* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 39. Unless stated otherwise, translations from Wang Bi's writings are based on Lynn's work. In what follows, the *Laozi zhilüe* will be cited as "*Introduction*" and Wang Bi's *Laozi* text and commentary, "*Classic*."
3. *Introduction*, 36.
4. *Classic*, 95.
5. *Introduction*, 39.
6. There are many other examples of this metaphorical interpretation of the terms *names* and *forms* and their relationship in Wang Bi. Although there are variations, usually the "forms" metaphorically refer to moral qualities and "names" refer to rewards in the form of (divisive) titles or reputation. For example, in his commentary on section 38 of the *Laozi*, Wang Bi writes, "It is because one functions not by using forms and rules and not by using names that it becomes possible for benevolence and righteousness, propriety and etiquette to manifest and display themselves . . . . It is when one upholds them [the people] with the Dao and unites and controls them with the mother that benevolence may be manifest but there is no esteem for it, and righteousness and propriety may be displayed but there is no wrangling over them. It is by making use of the nameless that names become honest and by making use of the formless that forms become perfect." Also explicit is his commentary on chapter 58: "[O]ne who is good at the conduct of government has no identifiable form, name, deliberate purpose, or procedure . . . . [A poor government] establishes punishment and names, promulgates rewards and penalties, in order to uncover treachery." See *Classic*, 122–23, 160–61.
7. *Introduction*, 39.
8. For further examples of Wang's metaphorical reading of the *Laozi* text, see my "The Nameless and Formless Dao as Metaphor and Imagery: Modeling the Dao in Wang Bi's *Laozi*," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 32, no. 3 (2005): 477–92.
9. That is, not "word" in the sense of each particular scribble on paper, but each character. So if I wrote two similar characters, they are one word. I put here "word (type)" to make this point, meaning a word of the same type, no matter how many different instantiations. Thus if one writes a word (type) "道" three times, (e.g. "道道道") there would be three instantiations of only one word (type).
10. *Introduction*, 39.
11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., 35–36.
13. Alan Chan, *Two Visions of the Way: A Study of the Wang Pi and Ho-shang Kung Commentaries on the Lao-tzu* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 22; *pinyin* romanization added in parenthesis.
14. Rudolf Wagner, *Language, Ontology, and Philosophy in China: Wang Bi's Scholarly Exploration of the Dark* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 89.
15. Ibid., 90; emphasis mine.
16. See Chad Hansen, *A Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).
17. Chad Hansen, "The Metaphysics of Dao," in *Comparative Approaches to Chinese Philosophy,* ed. Bo Mou (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), 214.
18. Wagner, *Language, Ontology, and Political Philosophy in China*, 92–93.
19. Alan Chan, *Two Visions*, 45–46.
20. This complements Tze-Ki Hon's study, "Hexagrams and Politics: Wang Bi's Political Philosophy in the *Zhouyi zhu*" in this volume. The argument there is that Wang's concern in the *Yijing* is principally political theory, and not ontology. If Hon and I are right, this suggests that we need to see *xuanxue* as situated in the milieu of a concern for politics and not exclusively speculative ontology. Alan Chan also makes a similar point in his study of He Yan 何晏 in this volume.
21. Indeed, this is consistent with Xu Gan's 徐幹 (170–217) treatment of names, just a decade before Wang Bi. His theory of names is correlative and at the same time metaphorically captures political (but not metaphysical) ideas. Thus for Xu Gan, the semiotic point that names (*ming*) should correlate with its actuality (*shi*) is the metaphor for the political prescription that one's reputation (*ming*) should accord with one's true abilities (*shi*). See John Makeham, *Name and Actuality in Early Chinese Thought* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994).
22. *Introduction*, 37.
23. Consider the famous "straw dogs passage" in chapter 5 of the *Laozi*; see *Classic*, 60.
24. See Alan Chan, *Two Visions*, 54.
25. Hence *li* is a heuristic concept, which captures parallel ideas. It has no ontological or cosmological reference to a law of nature, in contrast with the Neo-Confucian concept of *li*. See Alan Chan's discussion in *Two Visions*, 53–54.
26. See Alan Chan, *Two Visions*, 54.

3

Hexagrams and Politics

Wang Bi's Political Philosophy in the Zhouyi zhu

TZE-KI HON

Since the publication of Tang Yongtong's 湯用彤 article in the *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* in 1947,[1] Wang Bi 王弼 (226–249) has been a main focus in Western studies of Chinese philosophy. This interest in Wang Bi is due in part to his brilliant commentaries on the *Laozi* 老子, the *Lunyu* 論語, and the *Yijing* 易經. It is also built on what Tang Yongtong called "the transition from cosmology to ontology," in which Wang Bi is said to have introduced a new mode of thinking known as *xuanxue* 玄學 (Scholarly Exploration of the Mysterious Dao).[2] Commonly rendered as "Neo-Daoism," *xuanxue* is compared to an Aristotelian ontology for its attempt to define the essence of the universe based on the dichotomy of certain key concepts: *you* 有 (being) and *wu* 無 (nonbeing), *ti* 體 (substance) and *yong* 用 (function), and *yi* 一 (one) and *zhong* 眾 (many).[3] These bipolar concepts, as Tang emphasizes, direct our attention from the phenomenal events surrounding us to the underlying structure or hidden pattern of the universe.

While Tang's thesis has inspired a large number of works on Wang Bi's *xuanxue*,[4] scholars tend to ignore his *Yijing* commentary, the *Zhouyi zhu* 周易注. Even when they discuss the *Zhouyi zhu*, they do so only selectively. For instance, they pay special attention to Wang's essay "Zhouyi lüeli" 周易略例 and his commentary on the hexagram "Fu" 復 (#24), where he appears to develop an ontology of *wu*. They stress the Jin dynasty (265–420) commentator Han Kangbo's 韓康伯 summary of Wang's interpretation of the concept of "*da yan zhi shu*" (大衍之數) in the "Xici" 繫辭 (Appended Remarks) section of the *Yijing*, where Wang seems to discuss the relationship between the "one" and the "many."[5] Certainly, this selective reading helps to elucidate "the transition from

cosmology to ontology," thereby drawing a sharp distinction between the scholarly pursuits in the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) and Wang Bi's *xuanxue*. Nevertheless, it does not give an account of Wang Bi's contribution to *Yijing* studies, nor does it explain why the *Zhouyi zhu* was for many centuries considered to be the standard commentary to the classic.

The challenge of the *Zhouyi zhu* is that it does not fit Tang Yongtong's thesis. Unlike his commentary to the *Laozi*, Wang Bi seldom discussed the ontology of *wu* when interpreting the *Yijing*. It is particularly true of his commentary on the sixty-four hexagrams and the "Wenyan" 文言,[6] where his main concern was building a responsive government and a stable society.[7] This political reading of the hexagrams had won him honor and fame in both medieval and late imperial China. For instance, the Tang court scholar Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574–648) considered him the best *Yijing* commentator in history because of his discussion of the art of governing.[8] Likewise, the Tang exegete Li Dingzuo 李鼎祚 distinguished him from other *Yijing* commentators by his undivided attention on "human affairs" (*renshi* 人事).[9] Similarly, the Northern Song scholar Li Gou 李覯 (1009–1059) applauded him for addressing "the urgent needs of state affairs" (急乎天下國家之用).[10] Other Northern Song exegetes, such as Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019–1086) and Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037–1101), wrote new *Yijing* commentaries modeling after Wang's political interpretation of hexagrams.[11] Certainly these scholars' views of Wang Bi reflect their interests and those of their times; but they also mean that there must be sufficient political discussion in the *Zhouyi zhu* to justify their views.

Then, what was Wang Bi's *xuanxue*? Was it a philosophical pursuit that marked the transition from cosmology to ontology? Or was it a multifaceted system of thought that included philosophical and political elements? To answer these questions, in this chapter I will compare the *Zhouyi zhu* with the commentaries of Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200), Xun Shuang 荀爽 (128–190), and Yu Fan 虞翻 (164–233). The goal of this comparison is twofold. First, I will locate the *Zhouyi zhu* in its own context. Rather than reading the *Zhouyi zhu* retrospectively as the beginning of *xuanxue*, I will show that the *Zhouyi zhu* was indeed a product of third-century China. Its intent, in short, was to address concrete and specific issues of the period. Second, directly answering the question about the nature of Wang Bi's *xuanxue*, I will demonstrate that Wang was as much a political thinker as a philosopher. I will affirm what Rudolf Wagner and Yu Dunkang 余敦康 have found, namely, that Wang's ontology was a political philosophy that promoted a new sociopolitical order after the fall of the Han dynasty.[12]

Yijing Commentaries in the Late Eastern Han

Although none of the *Yijing* commentaries of the Eastern Han period (25–220) survives, large numbers of excerpts are available in Li Dingzuo's *Zhouyi jijie* 周易集解 (Collected Commentaries on the *Yijing*).[13] The *Zhouyi jijie* is especially helpful in reconstructing the views of three late Eastern Han commentators: Zheng Xuan, Xun Shuang, and Yu Fan. Not only were their commentaries frequently quoted or excerpted in the *Zhouyi jijie*, their interpretations of the sixty-four hexagrams (particularly Yu Fan's) were listed systematically, providing a clear picture of how they understood the hexagram images and hexagram lines. Also, living close to Wang Bi's time and yet operating in a different cultural environment, the three commentators provided a stark contrast to what we call *xuanxue*.[14] In the quotations and excerpts, we find their exegetical method drastically different from Wang Bi's, and we know that they lived in a world substantially different from Wang Bi's.

One of the assumptions of the three Eastern Han commentators was that every word in the *Yijing* is a metaphor for trigrams and hexagrams. For them, this rule applies not only to those sections devoted to hexagram images such as the "Da Xiang" 大象 and the "Xiao Xiang" 小象, but also to every part of the *Yijing*.[15] Even those *Yijing* passages that explicitly discuss historical events—such as the reference to the founding of the Shang and Zhou dynasties in Hexagrams "Ge" 革 (#49) and "Ding" 鼎 (#50)—have to be understood as symbols for trigrams and hexagrams. In the words of Yu Fan, trigrams and hexagrams are essential to understanding the *Yijing* because they are "the vehicle for observing images and attaching words" (皆觀象繫辭).[16] Thus, during the Eastern Han, the accuracy and proficiency of a *Yijing* commentator was measured by his ability to read the *Yijing* as hexagram images. For example, in the "Wenyan" of "Qian" 乾 (#1), Confucius reportedly discussed the harmony in nature where "water flows to where it is wet, and fire goes toward where it is dry" (水流濕，火就燥). In interpreting the "Wenyan" statement, Xun Shuang wrote:

> When the yang force is activated in trigram "Kun," "Kun" becomes "Kan." Because "Kun" symbolizes pure yin, "wet" is mentioned [in the "Wenyan"]. When the yin force is activated in trigram "Qian," "Qian" becomes "Li." Because "Qian" symbolizes pure yang, therefore "dry" is mentioned [in the "Wenyan"].
> 陽動之坤而為坎，坤為純陰，故曰「濕」也。陰動之乾而為離，乾者純陽，故曰「燥」也。[17]

For Xun Shuang, every word in the "Wenyan" statement is a symbol of a trigram. So, water stands for "Kan" ☵; wet represents "Kun" ☷; fire invokes "Li" ☲; dry implies "Qian" ☰. With this metaphoric reading, Xun Shuang turns the "Wenyan" statement into a meditation on the relationship of trigrams.

Similarly, in commenting on "Ge" (#49), Zheng Xuan uses its two trigrams to explain why it should be taken to mean a dynastic change. His commentary reads:

> "Ge" means to change. Water and fire grow together when they are applied to the changes in human affairs. Their effects are similar to rulers who are commissioned by heaven to change the calendar and the color of clothing. This is the meaning of "Ge."
> 革, 改也。水火相息而更用事, 猶王者受命, 改正朔, 易服色, 故謂之「革」也。[18]

Zheng Xuan's argument rests on the two trigrams that make up "Ge" ䷰: "Li" ☲ at the bottom and "Dui" ☱ at the top. For him, "Li" represents fire, and "Dui" symbolizes water. When water flows from the top, and fire provides heat from the bottom, they symbolize a situation where everything is well coordinated and fully prepared. For Zheng Xuan, this is the perfect condition for a leader to start a new dynasty.

To maximize their opportunities to read the *Yijing* as a text about hexagram images, the three Eastern Han commentators came up with a number of interpretive strategies. One strategy was that a hexagram can automatically transform into its opposite (or *pangtong* 旁通) by converting the yang lines into the yin lines or vice versa.[19] For example, "Qian" 乾 (#1) ䷀ can become "Kun" 坤 (#2) ䷁ and "Fu" 復 (#24) ䷗ can transform into "Gou" 姤 (#44) ䷫. With the yin-yang conversion, the Eastern Han commentators doubled their resources in commenting on hexagrams. Take, for instance, Yu Fan's commentary on the hexagram statement of "Bo" 剝 (#23) ䷖. He wrote:

> ["Bo" symbolizes] the diminution of the yang by the yin and its opposite hexagram is "Guai." With the soft changing the firm, ["Bo" refers to a situation where] the Way of petty persons is strengthened: fathers are murdered by their sons, and kings are murdered by their officials. Thus, [the hexagram line says:] "It would not bring benefit if one embarks on an adventure."
> 陰消乾也, 與夬旁通。以柔變剛, 小人道長, 子弒其父, 臣弒其君, 故「不利有攸往」也。[20]

By mentioning that "Guai" (#43) ䷪ is the *pangtong* hexagram of "Bo," Yu Fan inserts hope in a seemingly bleak situation. Although "Bo" is where the yin dominates the yang by five to one, he reminds readers that the present situation is temporary because the reverse will soon occur (such as in "Guai") where the yang will dominate the yin. By highlighting "Guai" as a *pangtong* hexagram of "Bo," Yu Fan underscores the codependence of yin and yang, and the changeability of hexagrams.

Another strategy is that a hexagram can become another hexagram by transposing some of its lines. Known as *yiwei* 易位, this strategy allows commentators to introduce other hexagrams when commenting on one hexagram. For instance, "Tai" 泰 (#11) ䷊ will become "Jiji" 既濟 (#63) ䷾ by transposing its second line (a yang) and its fifth line (a yin). Likewise, "Dazhuang" 大壯 (#34) ䷡ will transform into "Xu" 需 (#5) ䷄ by switching its fourth line (a yang) and its fifth line (a yin). Much more versatile than *pangtong*, the transposition of hexagram lines gave the Eastern Han commentators the flexibility to inject new ideas into a hexagram, even if those ideas were foreign to the hexagram. Take, for instance, "Dazhuang" 大壯 (#34) ䷡. It is a hexagram about "great strength," or more specifically the strength of the first four yang lines advancing into the territory of the top two yin lines. Although "Dazhuang" appears to be aggressive, assertive, and adventurous, Yu Fan emphasized caution and patience in his commentary. He wrote:

> *Zhuang* means injury. *Da* refers to the fourth line. [The fourth line] loses its position by submitting to the yin [in the fifth line]. [The interlocking trigram] "Dui" stands for destruction and damage. Hence, there is injury. If [the fourth line] changes its position with the fifth line, then the order [of the hexagram] will be proper. For this reason, [the hexagram line says:] "benefits will come to one who perseveres."
> 壯, 傷也。大謂四。失位為陰所乘, 兌為毀折, 傷。與五易位乃得正, 故「利貞」也。[21]

In "Dazhuang" ䷡, the bottom four yang lines are encroaching upon the territory of the top two yin lines, and a confrontation seems inevitable. And when the confrontation intensifies, the devastating effect will first be felt by the fourth line because it is at the frontline of the advancing yang lines. For Yu Fan, the only way that the fourth yang line can avoid a devastating blow is to switch its position with the yin fifth line,

thereby transforming "Dazhuang" into "Xu" ䷄. Being an auspicious hexagram full of encouraging phrases such as "*heng*" 亨 (prosperous) and "*zhen ji*" 貞吉 (perseverance yields good results), "Xu" will bring peace and calm to an otherwise tense situation.

In addition to *yiwei*, a hexagram can transform into another hexagram with its interlocking trigrams (*hugua* 互卦 or *huti* 互體), that is, using four or five of the hexagram lines to form two trigrams.[22] For instance, "Ge" 革 (# 49) ䷰ can transform into "Jiji" 既濟 (#63) ䷾ by its interlocking trigrams. In commenting on the hexagram statement of "Ge," Yu Fan wrote:

> After the fourth line changes into a yin, [trigram] "Li" is formed. Because the fifth line is in the middle of [trigram] "Kan," the hexagram statement says: "There is a growth of trust after a day of activity." Thus, after the fourth line changes [from a yang into a yin], hexagram "Jiji" is formed.
> 四動體離, 五在坎中, 故「已日乃孚」。四既變以成既濟。[23]

According to Yu Fan, a series of steps have to take place for "Ge" to transform into "Jiji." First, the yang fourth line of "Ge" transforms into a yin line. Then, the third, fourth and fifth lines of "Ge" form trigram "Li" ☲. And then, the fourth, fifth, and sixth lines of "Ge" form trigram "Kan" ☵. Finally, by combining the "Li" and "Kan" trigrams, one will have the hexagram "Jiji." Seemingly complicated and cumbersome, this method gave the Eastern Han commentators the liberty to render some of the ambiguous *Yijing* lines into metaphors for hexagrams. A case in point is the meaning of "the growth of trust after a day of activity" (已日乃孚) in "Ge." With the two interlocking trigrams of "Ge" in mind, Yu Fan had little difficulty in explaining the meaning of this line. For him, "Li" (third, [transformed] fourth, and fifth lines of "Ge") denotes the sun or *ri* 日, and "Kan" (fourth, fifth, and sixth lines of "Ge") represents trust or *fu* 孚. Joined together, "Li" and "Kan" form the hexagram "Jiji," which describes the peace and prosperity of a perfect order in which all the yang positions (lines 1, 3, 5) are occupied by yang lines and all the yin positions (lines 2, 4, 6) are occupied by yin lines.

In stressing the interchangeability of hexagrams, the Eastern Han commentators made clear that hexagrams have to be understood as parts of a collectivity rather than discrete entities. For them, the goal of studying a hexagram is to find out where it stands in the system of hexagrams.[24] To this end, they often list a number of possible hexa-

grams into which a hexagram may transform, reminding readers that no hexagram is fixed both in form and in substance. This emphasis on the collectivity of hexagrams does not imply that individual hexagram lacks intrinsic value. What it means is that the value of a hexagram has to be measured in terms of its relationship to other hexagrams. Take, for example, "Fu" 復 (#24). As mentioned earlier, "Fu" ䷗ is linked to "Gou" (#44) ䷫ through *pangtong*. In addition, "Fu" is part of a series of hexagrams demonstrating "return in seven days" (七日來復). Originally part of the hexagram statement and the "Tuan" 彖 statement of "Fu," "return in seven days" was understood in the Eastern Han as the return of the yang force after being diminished by the yin force. For them, the ebb and flow of the yin and yang forces can be represented in twelve hexagrams:

> "Fu" 復 (#24) ䷗, "Lin" 臨 (#19) ䷒, "Tai" 泰(#11) ䷊, "Dazhuang" 大壯(#34) ䷡, "Guai" 夬 (#43) ䷪, "Qian" 乾 (#1) ䷀, "Gou" 姤 (#44) ䷫, "Dun" 遯 (#33) ䷠, "Pi" 否(#12) ䷋, "Guan" 觀 (#20) ䷓, "Bo" 剝 (#23) ䷖, "Kun" 坤 (#2) ䷁

Known as *Xiao xi gua* 消息卦 ("Flying and Hiding Hexagrams"), this series of hexagrams denotes both the gradual increase of the yang force (reading from "Fu" to "Qian"), and the gradual increase of the yin force (reading from "Gou" to "Kun").[25] Moreover, the twelve hexagrams are supposed to be continuous, that is, when the series ends with "Kun," it will begin anew with "Fu." Based on *Xiao xi gua*, Yu Fan explained the meaning of "return in seven days":

> [The "Tuan" statement] means that when "Qian" turns into "Kun," [the yang force] emerges at the bottom of [trigram] "Zhen" to form [Hexagram] "Fu." Because the yang is the Way, hence, the statement says: "The return of the Way." The firm is represented by daytime. Since it takes six days for the six lines of "Qian" to be replaced by the yin, when the firm emerges at the bottom [of "Fu"], the statement describes the process as "return in seven days, the movement of heaven."
> 謂乾成坤, 反出於震而來復。陽為「道」, 故「復其道」。剛為晝日, 消乾六爻為六日, 剛來反初, 故「七日來復, 天行也」。[26]

For Yu Fan, "return in seven days" simply means the return of the yang force through seven hexagrams. In the commentary, he mentions that it takes six hexagrams (from "Gou" to "Kun") for the six yang

lines to be replaced by the yin lines, and it takes an extra hexagram ("Fu") to show the emergence of the yang line. Then, by equating the "seven days" with the seven hexagrams, he takes "return in seven days" as the return of the yang force in seven hexagrams.

Arbitrary as it may seem, Yu Fan's commentary on "Fu" underscores the importance of linking one hexagram to other hexagrams. By linking a hexagram to a web of hexagrams, he demonstrates that the cosmos is orderly, stable, and predictable. Like the hexagrams, the cosmos is orderly because it is governed by a few simple rules, such as the ebb and flow of the yin and yang forces. Like the hexagrams, the cosmos is stable because it follows a fixed pattern such as the four seasons, solstices, solar intervals, and pitch-pipes. Like the hexagrams, the cosmos is predictable because one thing will automatically transform into something else based on predetermined rules and patterns.[27] For these reasons, it comes as no surprise that *Xiao xi gua* were essential to the three Eastern Han *Yijing* commentators. Not only did the twelve hexagrams show graphically the ebb and flow of the yin and yang forces, they also laid out clearly the sequence of events. As such, the twelve hexagrams helped to reduce the uncertainties in life. Once a person identifies a hexagram in this system (say, "Fu"), that person can immediately tell what has happened previously and what will happen thereafter. Accordingly, that person may make plans to solve existing problems and to shape the future.

On the whole, it was this strong emphasis on the orderliness, stability, and predictability of hexagrams that distinguishes the three Eastern Han *Yijing* commentators from Wang Bi. And no exegete personified the difference more sharply than Zheng Xuan who, throughout early medieval China, was considered to be Wang Bi's rival in *Yijing* scholarship. In the *Zhouyi jijie*, we find a long excerpt of Zheng Xuan's commentary on the "Da Xiang" statement of "Ding" (#50) that helps to illustrate why he was such a strong competitor to Wang Bi. Zheng Xuan wrote:

> "Ding" invokes an image. It connotes the function of wood and fire. It possesses two interlocking trigrams: "Qian" and "Dui." "Qian" symbolizes metal, and "Dui" represents marsh....The food in a cauldron is cooked to feed people. Its impact is similar to a sagely ruler who practices the way of humanity and righteousness in order to teach the world how to live properly. That is what "Ding" means. 鼎, 象也。 卦有木火之用, 互體乾兌。乾為金, 兌為澤 … 鼎亨孰以養人, 猶聖君與仁義之道, 以教天下也, 故謂之鼎矣。[28]

In his commentary, Zheng Xuan skillfully employs hexagram images to prove that "Ding" teaches the moral duty of a sagely ruler. To make his point, he first calls attention to the two trigrams that make up "Ding" ䷱: "Sun" ☴ at the bottom and "Li" ☲ at the top. Then, he defines "Ding" as the combined force of wood ("Sun") and fire ("Li"), highlighting the fact that "Ding" is used for preparing food for people. He then expands on the theme of meal preparation by creating two interlocking trigrams from "Ding": "Qian" ☰ (the second, third, and fourth lines) and "Dui" ☱ (the third, fourth, and fifth lines). With these two interlocking trigrams, he underlines the political and moral implications of "Ding." That is, with the metal in "Qian" and the water in "Dui," a ruler possesses the necessary resources to feed the people and thereby apply the "way of humanity and righteousness." By invoking the hexagram images of "Sun," "Li," "Qian," and "Dui" in interpreting "Ding," Zheng Xuan proves that images are the key to understanding the *Yijing*. As we will find out, Wang Bi has problems with this method and he strives to give a different reading of the *Yijing*.

Hexagrams as Discrete Situations

In their recent works, Rudolf Wagner and Yu Dunkang point out that the precocious genius Wang Bi was living in a time of unprecedented freedom, the Zhengshi 正始 era (240–249).[29] The unprecedented freedom of the Zhengshi era came from two sources. First, during the Zhengshi era, there was relative peace after years of tension and commotion following the fall of the Han dynasty. Being a member of what Wagner calls "the first post-war generation"[30] after the destruction of the Han, Wang Bi no longer felt the need to follow the Han tradition of learning that emphasized rote memorization, respect for precedence, and adherence to received teaching. As a result, he was free to find new ways to understand the classics. Second, the Zhengshi era was a time of fundamental reforms in government and society. Politically, the Han imperial system was replaced by a coalition of military generals and local magnates. Socially, the center of power was shifted from the imperial court in the capital to provincial leaders. These drastic changes offered the best and brightest, such as Wang Bi, with ample opportunities for innovation. Particularly under three forward-looking leaders—Sima Shi 司馬師 (208–255), Xiahou Xuan 夏侯玄 (209–254), and He Yan 何晏 (d. 249)—there were concerted efforts to cultivate a "cult of youth genius," which gave premium to originality and creativity in interpreting the classics, expressing thoughts, and coming up with new ideas.[31]

In this atmosphere of youthful exuberance, it came as no surprise that Wang Bi proposed to read the *Yijing* from a totally new perspective. In his essay "Zhouyi lüeli," we find evidence of a young and brilliant scholar who attempted to break from tradition by completely rewriting the rules of interpreting the *Yijing*. One of the new rules he proposed was that the *Yijing* should be read not as a system of hexagrams, but as a text about the ambiguity of change. In the section "Ming yao tong bian" 明爻通變, he questioned the usefulness of numerology, calendars, laws, measurements, and customs, which, he claimed, gave people a false sense of security and an illusion for predicting the future.[32] For him, changes simply run on their own course beyond human comprehension. In music, he reminds us that when notes of the same tone correspond, they are not necessarily equal in pitch. In geography, he stresses that places high up on the mountains are often not as desirable as valleys in receiving water, because water flows from the highlands to the lowlands. In respect to human relationships, he points out that kinsmen may not necessarily be on friendly terms because of their different dispositions, and strangers may end up becoming compatible partners because of their common interests.[33] With these examples, he draws attention to the artificiality of the "normal" ways of distinguishing relationships—far and near, high and low, big and small, love and hate, true and false, affinity and discordance, and so on. These distinctions are artificial not only because they are human-made, but also because they put people or things into categories, assuming a direct correspondence between name (*ming* 名) and reality (*shi* 實).[34] But Wang Bi cautions us that the world is far more complex and complicated than what human distinctions can convey. In this world where nothing is stationary, there is no norm in our conventional static sense; the only "norm" is the ceaseless changes that take contradictory forms.[35]

To come to terms with changes, Wang Bi proposed a new way to read the *Yijing*. Unlike the three Eastern Han commentators, he suggested reading the sixty-four hexagrams independently as sixty-four separate situations. In the section "Ming gua shi bian tong yao" 明卦適變通爻, he stresses that there is much to be learned from each hexagram without linking it to other hexagrams.[36] For him, each hexagram, whether auspicious or inauspicious, simple or complicated, is a symbol of the possibility of change. First, a hexagram denotes a specific situation (*shi* 時), such as war, peace, harmony, discord, conflict, and reconciliation. Second, the six lines of a hexagram represent the room to maneuver (or *yong* 用) within that particular situation, showing both challenges

and options. Precisely in this juncture that exists between what is given and what can be done, Wang Bi sees the fluidity of human affairs and the importance of making the right decisions. With proper action, he asserts, one can turn what appears to be a failure into a blessing. Lacking appropriate action, he cautions, one can make what appears to be flourishing into a disaster. For him, the greatest contribution of the *Yijing* is that it allows one "to contemplate changes by examining the hexagram lines, and [in so doing] exhaust the possibilities of change" (觀爻思變, 變斯盡矣).[37]

In order to exhaust the possibilities of change, Wang Bi urged his readers to adopt a flexible attitude toward hexagram images. In the section "Ming xiang" 明象, he asked his readers to "forget about the hexagram images after attaining their meanings" (得意而忘象).[38] By "forgetting about the hexagram images," Wang Bi did not mean that commentators need no longer pay attention to them in interpreting the *Yijing*. What he meant was that commentators should stop treating every word of the *Yijing* text as a symbol of trigrams and hexagrams. Rather, they should use the *Yijing* creatively and flexibly to come to terms with changes in their lives. In a sarcastic tone, he ridiculed what he considered to be the erroneous practices in the Eastern Han. He asked if it was necessary to use a horse as a symbol to indicate "vitality" (*jian* 健), or to use a cow to indicate "obedience" (*shun* 順).[39] Underlying these rhetorical questions was his concern about the Eastern Han practice of linking a hexagram to a system of hexagrams. He was particularly critical of the method of interlocking trigrams, which, he believed, gave the commentators too much liberty to bend and manipulate a hexagram. Regarding the Eastern Han practice of linking a hexagram to a system of hexagrams, he issued a stern warning:

> When interlocking trigrams are inadequate to explain a hexagram, [the commentators] employ other means to transform hexagrams. And when that proves inadequate, they employ [the theory of] Five Agents. Once they have decided to deviate from the original meaning [of the *Yijing* text], they continue to create sophisticated methods [to bolster their claims].
> 互體不足, 遂及卦變。變又不足, 推致五行。一失其原, 巧愈彌甚。[40]

For Wang Bi, his new interpretive theories would not only shed light on the *Yijing*, but also recover the original meanings of the text that had been disguised and deformed by the Eastern Han commentators.

To Mount the Six Dragons in a Timely Manner

The effect of Wang Bi's new interpretive theories can be seen in his commentary on "Qian" (#1) ䷀. As the first hexagram of the sixty-four hexagrams, "Qian" assumes a significant role in the *Yijing*. On the one hand, it is a hexagram of pure yang, that is, all its six lines are yang. As such, the hexagram represents both the strengths and weaknesses of the yang force, which is often described as aggressive, assertive, adventurous, but egotistical and idiosyncratic. On the other hand, the hexagram provides a clear picture of how the line position affects the options that one has in managing a situation. From the bottom to the top, the six lines of "Qian" are likened to six different dragons: the hidden dragon, the rising dragon, the perplexed dragon, the leaping dragon, the flying dragon, and the arrogant dragon. The six dragons are what they are due to their position in the hexagram. The first line is a hidden dragon because it is located at the beginning of the lower trigram, far from the center of action; the second line is a rising dragon because it is the leader of the lower trigram, giving direction to the other two lines; the third line is a perplexed dragon because it is caught in the cleavage between the lower trigram and the upper trigram, puzzled by its ambiguous status. The fourth line is a leaping dragon because it has made a decisive move to jump from the lower trigram to the upper trigram; the fifth line is a flying dragon because it is the leader of both the upper trigram and the entire hexagram; and the sixth line is an arrogant dragon because it refuses to step down after passing its prime.

In the Eastern Han, commentators did not focus on the symbolism of the "six dragons." Rather, they linked "Qian" to other hexagrams such as "Tai" (#11), "Pi" (#12), "Jiji" (#63), and "Weiji" (#64).[41] To Wang Bi, this interpretive strategy is flawed because it pays little attention to the meaning of "Qian" as a hexagram.[42] To redress this flaw, he explained the meaning of the "six dragons."

> To elucidate the Way of beginning and end, one has to complete one's task by assuming the six positions [of "Qian'] in a timely fashion. Since there is no constancy in the rise and fall [of the six lines], one has to use them in a timely fashion. When the situation calls for resigning from office, one should assume the position of a hidden dragon. When the situation calls for joining office, one should assume the position of a flying dragon. Thus, it is said [in the "Tuan" statement]: "To mount the six dragons in a timely manner."
> 大明乎終始之道，故六位不失其時而成。升降無常，隨時而用。處則乘潛龍，出則乘飛龍，故曰「時乘六龍」也。[43]

In his commentary, Wang Bi stresses the importance of "mounting the six dragons in a timely manner." He tells us that at a certain point in time, a person may have to lie dormant due to unfavorable circumstances, thus assuming the role of a "hidden dragon." In another point in time when the situation has been greatly improved, the same person can be assertive and forward-looking, thereby assuming the role of a "flying dragon." By "mounting the six dragons in a timely manner," we will gain control of our surroundings, take command of our lives, and above all, immerse fully and fruitfully in changes.

Since Wang Bi believes that the purpose of reading the *Yijing* is to come to terms with changes, he considers every hexagram as equally important. For him, what makes a hexagram auspicious or inauspicious does not depend on its omen; rather, it depends on how well a person responds to the situation revealed in the hexagram. For this reason, when commenting on the apparently auspicious hexagrams, he always points out the hidden dangers and the source of trouble in them. Likewise, regarding the apparently inauspicious hexagrams, he always highlights the source of hope and the potential for growth in them. Take, for instance, the hexagram "Shi" 師 (#7). "Shi" is definitely auspicious, as the statements of the second, fourth, fifth, and sixth lines contain words such as "auspicious" (*ji* 吉) and "without remorse" (*wu jiu* 無咎). But to a reader's surprise, in his commentary Wang Bi focuses on the danger of this hexagram. Even more astonishing, he chooses the most auspicious line, the second line, to issue a warning about impending danger. In the hexagram "Shi" ䷆, the second line is the most auspicious because it is the dominant line of the hexagram. Its power comes from being the only yang line among five yin lines. As the only yang line in the hexagram, the five yin lines compete to join with it to form a pair. As auspicious as it may seem, Wang Bi reminds readers that there is potential for great danger in this line. His commentary reads:

> [The second line] is a firm line located in the middle [of the lower trigram], resonating with the fifth line. It is indeed the central line of "Shi." Blessed by the ruler [in the fifth line], it is the leader of "Shi." With heavy responsibility, [the leader will meet with] misfortune if the intended goal is not achieved. Thus, it is said [in the line statement]: "With good fortune, there will be no remorse."[44]
> 以剛居中, 而應於五, 在師而得其中者也。承上之寵, 為師之主, 任大役重, 无功則凶, 故吉乃无咎也。[45]

For Wang Bi, the danger of "Shi" lies in the fact that the value of any massive mobilization depends on whether it will achieve its goal.

A massive mobilization, be it military or civilian, demands huge human and material resources. With the huge costs, the leaders must have clear goals in mind and must possess well-planned strategies to achieve them.[46] It is precisely the huge costs of organizing the masses that prompt Wang Bi to stress the danger in the second line. Being the leader of the six lines, the second line is given the heavy responsibility of charting out the course for the group. On the surface, it is an honor that everyone longs for. At the same time, it is a dangerous moment, because the fortune of both the leader and the whole group can be ruined in one stroke.

Precisely because human decision is crucial to the outcome of an event, Wang Bi does not find "Sun" 損 (#41) ䷨ ominous. On the surface, the "Tuan" statement of "Sun" seems to suggest a worrisome situation. By defining "Sun" as "diminishing of what is below to satisfy the interest of what is above" (損下益上), the "Tuan" statement refers to a time when those who are high up in social position take advantage of those who are in low position, or when those who are politically or physically strong victimize those who are weak. Yet, despite the glaring injustice, Wang Bi stresses optimism in "Sun." His commentary reads:

> If a person diminishes the firm without doing anything vicious, or benefits those above without flattering them, then what blame is there to rectify? Although he is not able to save big troubles, if he sets out to do things this way, he will not be rejected.
> 損剛而不為邪, 益上而不為諛, 則何咎而可正? 雖不能拯濟大難, 以斯有往, 物无距也。[47]

Wang Bi tells us that the source of hope in "Sun" comes from one's decision not to cause excessive harm to others. In the situation of "Sun" where everyone cannot but engage in bullying the poor and powerless, there are ways that one can minimize the pains inflicted on the victims. For Wang Bi, "supreme good fortune" (*yuan ji* 元吉) will go to those who find ways to minimize harms to the public while carrying out their unpleasant tasks.[48]

This reverse reading of hexagrams recurs in Wang Bi's commentary on the last two hexagrams, "Jiji" 既濟 (Completion, #63) and "Weiji" 未濟 (Incompletion, #64). On the surface, "Jiji" ䷾ appears to have a perfect order of lines: the yang in the first position is aggressive to begin a new enterprise; the yin in the second position is supportive to the fifth line; the yang in the third position is ready to make the leap from the lower trigram to upper trigram; the yin in the fourth position is going to rest after making the transition to the upper trigram; the yang in the

fifth position is strong and assertive in providing leadership to the entire hexagram; and the yin in the sixth position is ready to yield graciously after finishing its service. In short, everything is in the right place and in the right order. Yet, ideal as "Jiji" may appear, Wang Bi urges caution and introspection in this seemingly ideal situation. His commentary reads:

> Do not forget about destruction while one is safe; do not forget about incompletion while one is in the state of completion.
> 存不忘亡, 既濟不忘未濟也。[49]

Wang Bi issues the warning because people usually lose their focus when things seem to run smoothly. With no incentive to make further improvement, they waste their time in waging wars (e.g., the third line) or elaborate meals (e.g., the fifth line). At the end, disasters occur (*zhong luan* 終亂) and the perfect order collapses.

Conversely, despite its ominous title "Incompletion," Wang Bi considers "Weiji" promising. On the surface, "Weiji" is clearly hampered by the wrong order of its six lines. All of the yang positions (first, third, and fifth lines) are occupied by yin, and all the yin positions (second, fourth, and sixth lines) are occupied by yang. With the wrong order, the six lines are out of sync, incapable of forming a cohesive and supportive team. Yet, for Wang Bi, it is precisely this imperfect order that gives "Weiji" the drive, the impetus, and the vitality to push forward. To make his point, Wang Bi argues that "Weiji" should be understood positively as "the potential for completion" (*keji* 可濟):

> Because the positions [of the six lines] are not in order, the hexagram is not able to complete its task. Since the firm and soft [lines] correspond to one another, the hexagram has the potential for completion.
> 位不當, 故未濟。剛柔應, 故可濟。[50]

In the commentary, Wang Bi stresses that although all the positions of "Weiji" are in the wrong order, the six lines correspond with one another in terms of their yin-yang nature. That is, the yin at the first and third positions corresponds with the yang at the fourth and sixth positions, and the yang at the second position corresponds with the yin at the fifth position. Because of these correspondences, Wang Bi contends that "Weiji" is full of immanent vitality. Once the immanent vitality is activated and realized by people making the right decisions (such as the sixth line), "Weiji" will be on its way to completion. As with "Sun" (#41), Wang Bi uses "Weiji" to show that human decisions, not circumstances, determine the outcome of an event.[51]

A New Political Order

By stressing human agency in initiating and completing changes, Wang Bi's *Yijing* commentary offered third-century readers not only a new interpretation of the classic, but also a new vision of political order. As mentioned earlier, the political reality of third-century China was such that military generals and local magnates had replaced the Han imperial court and the aristocrats as the real power holders. On the one hand, the devolution of power created a more diverse and complex political landscape, giving rise to ample opportunities for negotiation, cooperation, and collaboration. On the other hand, the competition among multiple players made political maneuvers highly contentious and conflictual, creating a tense if not hostile environment. Thus, the pressing need for Wang Bi and his "post-war generation" was to define a new political order that would preserve the fluid and diverse political environment as well as prevent the country from degenerating into civil war. Characterized by Yu Dunkang as "collaborative centralization" (*hexie de tongyi* 和諧的統一), the new political order was composite in nature.[52] It must be flexible enough to cater to local needs yet strong enough to unite the country.

In this context, Wang Bi's two interpretive strategies—treating each hexagram separately and focusing on the six lines of a hexagram—were imbued with political meanings. First, by focusing on one hexagram at a time, he argued that politics is complex and complicated, so much so that it requires careful and thorough understanding of its various facets. By not linking a hexagram to a system of hexagrams, he treated each political event as unique and independent, dictated by its own set of rules, its own group of players, and its own anticipated outcomes. In so doing, he privileged the centrifugal forces that were on the rise after the collapse of the Han imperial authority. Second, by focusing on the different functions of the six lines of a hexagram, he stressed the need for consultation, cooperation, and partnership in making political decision. As individual players, the six lines of a hexagram are indeed different; they are different in roles, potential, temperament, and aspiration. But as parts of a team, the six lines have to work together. To achieve their common goal, they have to learn to coexist, compromise, and above all, make sacrifices. By stressing the need for "mounting the six dragons in a timely manner," Wang Bi promoted a collaborative spirit that had brought peace to parts of China during the Zhengshi era.[53]

The political underpinning of Wang Bi's two interpretive strategies is clearly shown in his commentary on "Ge" 革 (#49) and "Ding" 鼎

(#50). As mentioned earlier, the two hexagrams are explicit in their political discussion. In "Ge," the discussion is focused on dynastic changes, particularly the "change in the mandate [of heaven] with Tang [of the Shang dynasty] and [King] Wu [of the Zhou dynasty]" (湯武革命). In "Ding," the discussion focuses on rebuilding the political order after a dynastic change, centering on the symbolism of a cauldron. In the Eastern Han, commentators did not suppress the political connotations of these two hexagrams. As we recall, in commenting on "Ding" Zheng Xuan stressed the moral duty of a political leader to implement "the way of humanity and righteousness." Yet, the Eastern Han commentators were not interested in the two hexagrams per se, but their relationship to other hexagrams. For instance, they discussed how "Ge" ䷰ can be transformed into "Dun" 遯 ䷠ (#33) by transposing its first and sixth lines, and they described how "Ge" can become "Meng" 蒙 (#4) ䷃ through *pangtong*.[54] Regarding the reference in "Ge" to the dynastic change in the Shang and Zhou dynasties, Yu Fan simply turned it into a discussion of the interlocking trigrams.[55] First, he equated the historical reference to trigram "Qian" ☰ because of its emphasis on bravery and daring acts. Then, he equated trigram "Qian" to the third, fourth, and fifth lines of "Ge." After that, he suggested a change of trigram, turning the trigram "Qian" into the trigram "Li" ☲ by replacing the middle yang line with a yin line. With this change, "Ge" ䷰ is transformed into "Jiji" ䷾, proving that the dynastic change in the Shang and Zhou dynasties was indeed auspicious and fruitful.

Turning to Wang Bi, we find a different interpretation of "Ge" and "Ding." For Wang Bi, "Ge" does not only mean the dynastic change in the Shang and Zhou dynasties, but also gradual and incremental political reforms. By giving "Ge" a broader meaning, he calls attention to a host of problems in a political reform, particularly its goal, implementation, support, duration, and outcome. To make his point, he focuses on the hexagram line "There is a growth of trust after a day of activity" (已日乃孚). His commentary reads:

> Ordinary people may participate in learning a habit, but they have difficulty in adapting to drastic changes. They may participate in celebrating the completion of a task, but they have difficulty in making plans at the beginning. For this reason, the Way of drastic change is that trust will not be earned within a day; it has to be earned after a whole day [of work]. . . . If at the end of the day there is still no sign of trust [from the people involved], then the drastic change must be inappropriate. Whenever drastic change is initiated, there is bound to

> be remorse and regret. But if a drastic change is appropriate, remorse can be avoided.
> 夫民可與習常, 難與適變。可與樂成, 難與慮始。故革之為道, 即日不孚, 已日乃孚也。… 已日而不孚, 革不當也。悔咎之所生, 生乎變動者也。革而當, 其悔乃亡也。[56]

Apparently, Wang Bi reads the statement "There is a growth of trust after a day of activity" both as an advice and a warning. As an advice, the statement counsels the leaders not to rush to implement political reform, but to give the people plenty of time to adapt and adjust to the changes. As a warning, the statement implies that a political reform will fail if the leaders do not carry it out patiently and prudently. To "avoid remorse" (悔乃亡), Wang Bi urges the leaders to seriously consider the interests of the people.

To further his argument, in the rest of his commentary Wang Bi describes the concrete steps that a ruler must take to carry out a successful political reform. He stresses that in the initial stage of the political reform (symbolized by lines one and two), the leaders should explain and publicize the new rules, so that the people will know what to do. He emphasizes that only after a long period of education and implementation (indicated in lines three and four) should the rulers take aggressive actions to force people to alter their behavior, including imposing severe punishment on those who oppose changes.[57] But at the end of the political reform (signified by lines five and six), he insists, the rulers should stop the aggressive intrusion in people's lives, allowing them to live normally without the fear of punishment.[58] Throughout his commentary, Wang Bi stresses prudence and patience in the leaders, and cooperation and support from the people. For him, it takes two parties to make a successful political reform, and the goal of political reform is to create a culture of trust in which everyone—the ruler and the ruled, the powerful and the powerless—will find a role to contribute to society.

The same emphasis on building a collaborative culture is found in Wang Bi's commentary on "Ding." In his commentary, Wang Bi discusses at great length the dual symbolism of "Ding" as a cauldron. As a sign of political authority, a cauldron is passed from one ruler to another to signify the transfer of power. As a cooking utensil, a cauldron is heated on a pile of wood to make food. Seemingly unrelated, Wang Bi argues that the two functions of "Ding" are essentially the same because both involve an intricate process of "removing the old and acquiring the new" (去故取新). Regarding "Ding" as a political symbol, Wang Bi's commentary reads:

> In "Ge," one removes the old; in "Ding," one acquires the new. To establish the new [institutions], it is imperative to appoint the right persons [in the government]. To remove the old [institutions], it is imperative to establish a clear set of laws.... "Ding" is a hexagram that concerns with the completion of a political reform. Since change has begun in "Ge," the completion of the reform [in "Ding"] requires fashioning ceremonial vessels and establishing laws. If the political reform is not followed by the founding of institutions, chaos will occur. If laws and institutions fit the needs of the time, the result [of the political reform] will be auspicious.
> 革去故而鼎取新。取新而當其人, 易故而法制齊明。… 鼎者, 成變之卦也。革既變矣, 則制器立法以成之焉。變而无制, 亂可待也。法制應時, 然後乃吉。[59]

Regarding "Ding" as a cooking utensil, Wang Bi comments:

> The function of a cauldron is to cook food. Because "Ge" is to remove the old and "Ding" is to create something new, it is appropriate that ["Ding"] is a vessel for cooking and blending. Even the sages and the worthies cannot forsake the task of removing the old and acquiring the new.
> 亨者, 鼎之所為也。革去故而鼎成新, 故為亨飪調和之器也。去故取新, 聖賢不可失也。[60]

In both cases, Wang Bi attempts to draw a direct parallel between cooking and governing. To prepare for cooking, a cauldron must be cleared of leftovers (as in first, second, and third lines of "Ding").[61] To cook a meal, fresh food and ingredients must be put into the cauldron gradually and orderly, allowing them to boil, simmer, and mix together (as in fourth, fifth, and sixth lines of "Ding").[62] Similarly, in rebuilding a political order after a dynastic change, the leaders also need to "remove the old and acquire the new." First, they have to establish their authority by discrediting and dismantling the previous regime. Then, they create a new government by setting a new political agenda, recruiting a new corps of officials, and issuing a new set of rules. In the process, the leaders (like a cook) need to act in a timely manner and carefully to create the right environment. They should not be too aggressive in dismantling the old regime, nor should they be too timid in founding a new political structure. Whatever measures they may take, the leaders must remember that political reform is not complete until the old system is totally replaced by a new one.[63]

Xuanxue as Political Philosophy

For third-century readers, Wang Bi's message in "Ge" and "Ding" was clear. In both hexagrams, they were warned of the huge political and social costs in dismantling the old political structure. In both hexagrams, they saw the strenuous efforts that were required to establish and maintain a new political order. While appearing to be more a reformist than a revolutionary, Wang Bi's political vision was aimed at the reality of his time. After the fall of the Han dynasty, he saw the need for establishing a new political order that would be less restrictive and autocratic. At the same time, he was mindful of the danger of allowing military generals and local magnates to take radical and explosive acts in pursuit of power. For this reason, even if the devolution of power in the third century appeared to encourage military generals and local magnates to take extreme measures, he reminded them of the importance of careful planning and thorough preparation in making political decisions. As shown in the slow but meticulous process of negotiation and cooperation in "Ge" and "Ding," Wang Bi promoted a system of government that was collaborative and yet centralized. On the one hand, it was a political structure based on a partnership among equals rather than the domination of the imperial court. On the other hand, it required a new type of leaders who were willing to make compromises and sacrifices to balance the interests of the central authority and the local leaders.

As such, Wang Bi's *xuanxue* was not only a philosophical meditation on the essence of the universe, but also a plan for rebuilding the political order of third-century China. Of course, as Tang Yongtong has pointed out, *xuanxue* was built on pairs of dichotomies such as *you* and *wu*, *ti* and *yong*, and *yi* and *zhong*. It is also true that Wang Bi's *xuanxue* was founded on an ontology of *wu*, clearly spelled out in his commentary to the *Laozi*.[64] Yet, as Rudolf Wagner has suggested, the dichotomies of *you* and *wu*, *ti* and *yong*, and *yi* and *zhong* also connote forms of partnership or webs of relationship in government and society.[65] Rather than viewing *wu* (nonbeing) merely as the ontological basis of the cosmos, we can also see it as the totality of the various political groups in government. Rather than viewing *ti* (substance) merely as the foundational structure of the universe, we can also see it as a political environment in which multiple players negotiate for power. Rather than viewing *yi* (one) merely as "one of the many," we can also see it as "one among the many" connoting a partnership among equals. This change of perspective does not diminish the importance of Wang Bi as a profound philosopher who made tremendous contribution to Chinese thought. Rather, it adds a new layer of meaning to Wang Bi's philosophy which has both ontological and

political implications. More important, it gives us a better understanding of why, throughout medieval China, Wang Bi had been considered the best *Yijing* commentator in history, and his *Zhouyi zhu* was accepted as the standard commentary to the classic.

Notes

1. Tang Yung-t'ung (Tang Yongtong), "Wang Pi's New Interpretation of the *I Ching* and *Lun-yu*," trans. Walter Liebenthal, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 10 (1947): 124–61.
2. Tang Yongtong, "Wei Jin xuanxue liupai lüelun" 魏晉玄學流派略論, in *Tang Yongtong xueshu lunwen ji* 湯用彤學術論文集 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1983), 233–44.
3. Tang Yongtong, "Wang Bi da yan yi lüeshi" 王弼大衍義略釋 and "Wang Bi zhi Zhouyi Lunyu xinyi" 王弼之周易論語新義, in *Tang Yongtong xueshu lunwen ji*, 245–53; 264–79. For a summary and an analysis of Tang Yongtong's view of *xuanxue*, see Rudolf G. Wagner, *Language, Ontology, and Political Philosophy in China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 83–88.
4. The list of publications on *xuanxue* is long. Among the more important ones in English language are: Alan K. L. Chan, *Two Visions of the Way: A Study of Wang Pi and the Ho-shang Kung Commentaries on the Lao Tzu* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991); Rudolf G. Wagner's trilogy on Wang Bi (*The Craft of a Chinese Commentator*, *A Chinese Reading of the Daodejing*, and *Language, Ontology, and Political Philosophy in China*), all published by the State University of New York Press, 2000–03. The more important ones in Chinese include: Chen Lai 陳來, "Wei Jin xuanxue de 'you' 'wu' fanchou xintan" 魏晉玄學的「有」「無」範疇新探, *Zhexue yanjiu* 哲學研究 9 (1986): 51–57; Feng Youlan 馮友蘭, "Wei Jin xuanxue guiwulun guanyu you wu de lilun" 魏晉玄學貴無論關於有無的理論, *Beijing daxue xuebao* (*Zhexue shehui kexue ban*) 北京大學學報 (哲學社會科學版) 1 (1986): 11–18; Wang Baoxuan 王葆玹, *Zhengshi xuanxue* 正始玄學 (Ji'nan: Qi Lu, 1987).
5. For prime examples of this selective reading of Wang Bi's *Zhouyi zhu*, see Fung Yu-lan (Feng Youlan), *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, volume 2, trans. Derk Bodde (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), 168–204; Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 314–24; Kidder Smith et al., *Sung Dynasty Uses of the I Ching* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 23–25. For Chinese publications, see Mou Zongsan 牟宗三, *Wei Jin xuanxue* 魏晉玄學 (Taipei: Sili Donghai daxue, 1962), 52–72; Liao Mingchun 廖名春, Kang Xuewei 康學偉, and Liang Weixian 梁韋弦, *Zhouyi yanjiu shi* 周易研究史 (Changsha: Hunan, 1991), 149–59.
6. The "Wenyan" consists of two parts. One part offers comments on the

hexagram "Qian" 乾 (#1), and the other on the hexagram "Kun" 坤 (#2). In the received text of the *Yijing*, the "Wenyan" is included in the two hexagrams.

7. For a discussion of Wang Bi's political and social visions in interpreting the hexagrams, see Edward Shaughnessy, "Commentary, Philosophy, and Translation: Reading Wang Bi's Commentary to the *Yi Jing* in a New Way," *Early China* 22 (1997): 221–45; Chen Guying 陳鼓應, "Wang Bi tiyong lun xinquan" 王弼體用論新詮, *Hanxue yanjiu* 漢學研究 22, no. 1 (June, 2004): 1–20. For a general discussion of the sociopolitical aspects of *xuanxue*, see Tang Yongtong and Ren Jiyu 任繼愈, *Wei Jin xuanxue zhong de shehui zhengzhi sixiang lüelun* 魏晉玄學中的社會政治思想略論 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin, 1956).
8. Kong Yingda, "Zhouyi zhengyi xu" 周易正義序 in *Zhouyi zhengyi* 周易正義 (*Siku quanshu* ed.), "Preface" ("Xu" 序), 1a–3b.
9. Li Dingzuo, *Zhouyi jijie*, *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書 ed., "Original Preface" ("Yuanxu" 原序), 3a; Li Daoping 李道平, *Zhouyi jijie zuanshu* 周易集解纂疏 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1994), "Preface" ("Xu"), 5.
10. Li Gou, "Shanding Yitu xulun" 刪定易圖序論 in *Quan Song wen* 全宋文, ed. Zeng Zaozhuang 曾棗莊 and Liu Lin 劉琳 (Chengdu: Ba Shu, 1988–1994), *juan* 900: 409. For a discussion of Li Gou's *Yijing* studies, see Tze-ki Hon, *The Yijing and Chinese Politics: Classical Commentary and Literati Activism in Northern Song Period, 960–1127* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 72–74.
11. See Peter Bol, "Su Shih and Culture" in *Sung Dynasty Uses of the I Ching*, 56–99; Tze-ki Hon, *The Yijing and Chinese Politics*, 102–106; 134–40.
12. Wagner, *Language, Ontology, and Political Philosophy in China*, 148–212; Yu Dunkang, *He Yan Wang Bi xuanxue xintan* 何晏王弼玄學新探 (Ji'nan: Qi Lu, 1991), 144–213.
13. For the biography of Li Dingzuo and a discussion of the *Zhouyi jijie*, see Zhu Bokun 朱伯崑, *Yixue zhexue shi* 易學哲學史, vol. 1 (Beijing: Beijing daxue, 1986), 388–90; Liao Mingchun, Kang Xuewei, and Liang Weixian, *Zhouyi yanjiu shi*, 195–97.
14. Although he was born in the Eastern Han period and lived until the Three Kingdoms period, Yu Fan is generally considered to be an Eastern Han commentator by virtue of his style of commentary. See Zhu Bokun, *Yixue zhexue shi*, 202–11; Liao Mingchun, *Zhouyi yanjiu shi*, 107–15.
15. Zhu Bokun, *Yixue zhexue shi*, vol. 1, 107–235; Liao Mingchun, *Zhouyi yanjiu shi*, 104–115.
16. Li Dingzuo, *Zhouyi jijie*, *juan* 10: 15b; Li Daoping, *Zhouyi jijie zuanshu*, 445.
17. *Zhouyi jijie*, *juan* 1: 17a; *Zhouyi jijie zuanshu*, 51–52. All translations in this article are mine.
18. *Zhouyi jijie, juan* 10: 8a; *Zhouyi jijie zuanshu*, 435.
19. For a summary of how commentators used *pangtong* to interpret the *Yijing*, see Bent Nielson, *A Companion to Yi Jing Numerology and Cosmology:*

Chinese Studies of Images and Numbers from Han (202 BCE*-220* CE*) to Song (960–1279* CE*)* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 185–88.
20. *Zhouyi jijie, juan* 5: 31a-b; *Zhouyi jijie zuanshu*, 253.
21. *Zhouyi jijie, juan* 7: 16a-b; *Zhouyi jijie zuanshu*, 333.
22. For a discussion of how commentators used *hugua* to interpret the *Yijing*, see Bent Nielson, *A Companion to Yi Jing Numerology and Cosmology*, 111–14.
23. *Zhouyi jijie, juan* 10: 8a; *Zhouyi jijie zuanshu*, 436.
24. Although this method of reading the *Yijing* hexagrams seems conventional from today's perspective, the *yili* 義理 commentators during the Wei-Jin, Tang, and Northern Song periods focused instead on the meaning of each hexagram. Wang Bi was among the first who stressed the importance of treating each hexagram as an independent unit; see further discussion below.
25. For a discussion of how commentators used the *Xiao xi gua* to interpret the *Yijing*, see Bent Nielson, *A Companion to Yi Jing Numerology and Cosmology*, 274–76. The translation given here is Nielson's; see 59–62.
26. *Zhouyi jijie, juan* 6: 3a; *Zhouyi jijie zuanshu*, 263.
27. For a discussion of the correlative cosmology in the Han dynasty, see John B. Henderson, *The Development and Decline of Chinese Cosmology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 1–53.
28. *Zhouyi jijie, juan* 10: 15a; *Zhouyi jijie zuanshu*, 444.
29. Rudolf G. Wagner, *The Craft of a Chinese Commentator: Wang Bi on the Laozi*, 9–26; Yu Dunkang, *He Yan Wang Bi xuanxue xintan*, 33–47.
30. Wagner, *The Craft of a Chinese Commentator*, 14.
31. Ibid., 17–19. See also Richard John Lynn, *The Classic of Changes: A New Translation of the I Ching as Interpreted by Wang Bi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 10–15.
32. Lou Yulie 樓宇烈, *Wang Bi ji jiaoshi* 王弼集校釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1980), 597–98.
33. Ibid., 597.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid., 604.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid., 609.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.
41. *Zhouyi jijie, juan* 1: 6a–30b; *Zhouyi jijie zuanshu*, 47–68.
42. In his commentary on "Qian," Wang Bi focuses on what the six lines mean. He frequently quotes the "Wenyan," which also discusses the meanings of the six lines. Throughout his commentary, Wang Bi does not mention any other hexagram. See Wang Bi's "Ming gua shi bian tong yao" for his view on finding the meaning of each hexagram, *Wang Bi ji jiaoshi*, 604.

43. *Wang Bi ji jiaoshi*, 213.
44. My translation of this line is substantively different from that of Richard Lynn. See Lynn, *The Classic of Changes*, 179. In translating the line, Lynn does not give due attention to Wang Bi's reference to hexagram images, particularly the meaning of the term "*zhong*" 中. By rendering *zhong* as "the Mean" (especially in the line "*yi gang ju zhong*"), Lynn injects a moral tone to an otherwise straightforward discussion of hexagram image.
45. *Wang Bi ji jiaoshi*, 256.
46. In commenting on the hexagram line of "Shi," Wang Bi cautions readers that before "staging a military campaign and mobilizing the masses" (興役動眾), the leaders must make sure that they have a good chance to achieve their goals. If the military campaign is likely to fail, they should not launch the adventure. See *Wang Bi ji jiaoshi*, 256.
47. Ibid., 420–21.
48. See Wang Bi's commentary on the fifth line of "Sun" in *Wang Bi ji jiaoshi*, 423.
49. Ibid., 526.
50. Ibid., 531.
51. For a discussion of the notion of human agency in Wang Bi's *Yijing* commentary, see Tze-ki Hon, "Human Agency and Change: A Reading of Wang Bi's *Yijing* Commentary," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 30, no. 2 (June 2003): 223–42.
52. Yu Dunkang, *He Yan Wang Bi xuanxue xintan*, 315–38.
53. Ibid.
54. *Zhouyi jijie, juan* 10: 8a; *Zhouyi jijie zuanshu*, 435–36.
55. *Zhouyi jijie, juan* 10: 9b; *Zhouyi jijie zuanshu*, 438.
56. *Wang Bi ji jiaoshi*, 464–65.
57. In commenting on the "Tuan" statement of "Ge," Wang explains what leaders should do to "bring joy through the practice of civility and enlightenment" (文明以說). His advice is that they should "respond to [the demands] of heaven and follow [the concerns] of the people" (應天順民). In commenting on lines 1 and 2 of "Ge," Wang Bi stresses the difficulty in the early stages of political reform when leaders have to face resistance (line 1) and seek support (line 2). See *Wang Bi ji jiaoshi*, 465–66.
58. In commenting on lines 4, 5, 6 of "Ge," Wang Bi focuses on the changes that a political reform will bring. First, after a while, there will be more support to the reform when its effects become clear (line 4). Second, after its full implementation, the reform will win support from even the most stubborn opponents (line 5). Finally, at the end of the political reform, the whole society (including the uneducated) will be delighted to be part of the new political system (line 6). See *Wang Bi ji jiaoshi*, 466–67.
59. Ibid., 468–69.
60. Ibid., 469.
61. See Wang Bi's commentary on lines 1 to 3 of "Ding," *Wang Bi ji jiaoshi*, 469–71.

62. See Wang Bi's commentary on lines 4 to 5 of "Ding," *Wang Bi ji jiaoshi*, 472–73.
63. See Wang Bi's commentary on the hexagram statement "鼎。元吉, 亨。" *Wang Bi ji jiaoshi*, 468–69.
64. See Alan Chan, *Two Visions of the Way*, 45–88; Wagner, *The Craft of a Chinese Commentator*, 53–114. Also see Jude Chua's discussion in this volume.
65. Wagner, *Language, Ontology, and Political Philosophy in China*, 148–212, esp., 202.

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4

Li in Wang Bi and Guo Xiang

Coherence in the Dark

Brook Ziporyn

The standard textbook doxa on the understanding of *li* 理 ("principle," "pattern," "coherence") in the two greatest *xuanxue* 玄學 thinkers, Wang Bi and Guo Xiang, is still perhaps that suggested long ago by Wing-tsit Chan:

> The major concept [in Guo Xiang] is no longer Tao, as in Chuang Tzu [Zhuangzi], but Nature (*Tzu-jan*) [*ziran* 自然, self-so]. Things exist and transform themselves spontaneously and there is no other reality or agent to cause them. Heaven is not something behind this process of Nature but is merely its general name. Things exist and transform according to principle, but each and every thing has its own principle. Everything is therefore self-sufficient and there is no need of an overall original reality to combine or govern them, as in the case of Wang Pi [Wang Bi] . . . . While Wang Pi emphasizes the one, Kuo [Guo] emphasizes the many. To Wang Pi, principle transcends things, but to Kuo, it is immanent in them.[1]

The implication seems to be that for Wang "principle" (*li*) is one, but for Guo it is many. This suggests that for Wang there is one overriding Dao, a shared principle of all things, while for Guo, each thing has its own particular principle, its own *li*. In this chapter, however, I hope to show that in an important sense it is truer to say that it is Wang Bi who develops a theory of distinctive individual principles of things, while Guo puts forth only a single principle for all things without exception: the principle of the self-so, *ziran*.

There is indeed a sense in which this amounts to an assertion by Guo of each thing having its own unique principle; but a truly *unique* principle is no longer a principle at all—it is unshared with any other entity, and in fact it is not even the "essence" *of* this one thing, but rather *is that thing itself*. I will argue that Wang's development of the idea of *li* in his *Zhouyi lüeli* 周易略例, expanding on ideas put forth in the *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 commentary to the *Laozi* and Wang's own understanding of the *Zhouyi*, introduces the idea of multiple individual *li* as "mini-Daos," bearing the same relation to each discrete situation that the Dao bears to the world as a whole. This chapter attempts both to overturn the dominant understanding of the relation between Wang and Guo, and also to make a contribution to the understanding of *li* in the history of Chinese thought, especially its sociopolitical roots and implications.

Contours of Early Daoist Philosophy

To address these developments in Wang and Guo, I would like to first delineate the contours of early Daoist thought as I understand them, with special attention to the relation between Dao and *li*, and the emergence of what I will call the *ironic* sense of these terms, in contrast to their original non-ironic meaning in the context of Confucian and Mohist thinking.

The term *Dao* is initially used by both the Confucians and Mohists to denote their "way" of doing things, a guiding discourse prescribing a set of practices (e.g., the system of traditional ritual) that lead to the attainment of some preconceived value. When these practices are mastered and internalized, one has "attained the Way" in question, and this "attainment" (*de* 得) is what is known as "virtue" (*de* 德). The term *Dao* is cognate with the term for "to lead or guide," and can also mean "to speak." Hence, its prescriptive force is particularly pronounced. It is perhaps best translated in this period as "guiding discourse." The present *Laozi* text begins with the well-known paradox usually translated as something like, "The Way that can be spoken of is not the Eternal Way," but in the context of early Chinese thought its original sense is probably closer to, "Guiding ways can be taken as guides, but they are then (no longer) constant (or reliable) guides."[2] Here we have the prescriptive sense of the term pushed to its extreme and thus stood on its head and annulled. The point is that the esteeming and commitment to a particular value perspective is precisely what undermines the attainment of the desired value. This idea rests on a wholesale critique of knowledge and valuation, which are seen as inextricably related. For

the desired value, in the view developed in this text, is actually part of a whole, and depends also on the rejected anti-value parts of that whole for its existence. If one commits to a value and dedicates oneself to eliminating the conflicting anti-value, one is destroying the roots for the value in question. The justification for this view is both epistemological and metaphysical. The text relates valuation to inherently evaluative social and linguistic practices, which have a determining effect on what human consciousness focuses its attention upon. Once we have words contrasting the fragrance of the flower, for example, with the stench of the fertilizer, we "look for" the flower and ignore the fertilizer. Failing to see the interdependence of the two, we commit ourselves to the "good"—we try to attain the fragrance without the stench, severing the relation, thereby killing the flower.

In this connection, the present *Laozi* text can be read as distinguishing between two forms of desire, those pertaining to the "stomach" and those pertaining to the "eye" (e.g., ch. 12). The former do not depend on a particular conscious image, are not lured forward by deliberate purpose—they arise spontaneously, have no explicit object, and have a natural level of satiation that limits their proliferation (the most striking example being the "infant's erection" adduced in chapter 55, which appears independently of any knowledge or mental images of sexual union). The latter, "eye" desires, are based on culturally informed systems of valuation—the ritual system and moral systems of society, on the one hand, and material gain, fame, and power on the other hand. These present to consciousness a particular image of what is desirable, and have no built-in level of satiation; indeed, they lead to ceaseless, unbalanced desire for more and more of the valued thing, more and more pure and intense versions of it, which in fact make the satisfaction of its wholesome, "stomach" equivalent or substratum (with its necessary association with and periodic collapse into its opposite) impossible. The text notes that all valued things emerge out of non-valued things, and in general what we regard as "Being" (literally, "having," as value as opposed to "not-having") comes out of Nothing (not-having—also primarily value terms here). When still part of the spontaneous "stomach" form of the life process, the two extremes tend to have a cyclical existence, so that when one reaches its extreme, it dissipates and is succeeded by the other. The stability of both the value and the non-value depends on maintaining the intrinsic relation between them.

In general, "the Dao" is a marker within the divided terms of discourse that points to the spontaneous, non-evaluative side of things, the neglected and negatively valued, from which the valued and the

evaluative emerge, and this Dao does indeed take on a metaphysical dimension here. Given the premise that whatever we look at is being carved out of a larger whole, which is neglected by this act of attention, and that this seeing implies also a valuation and an incipient desire and action, we can give a very simple definition of the Dao: The (ironic) Dao is simply whatever we are not looking at. From this simple definition, it derives all its traditional attributes. It is the unseen and unseeable *source* and end-point of all concrete existences. It is also their *course* in the sense that they have a tendency to "return" in a bell-shaped pattern to that unseen source. The source is by definition unseen, but manifested in its function as a center of gravity toward which things return, hence manifest as the course of things. It is also the *stuff* of which they consist in the sense that the unseen and unattended to, the "unhewn raw material" of a useful utensil, has a crucial double meaning: it is both (1) what is left over when the utensil has been chipped away (that is, when the valued focus of attention is chipped away from the undifferentiated pre-valued state), and (2) also the whole of that unvalued, unhewn stuff itself, prior to the cutting. The Dao is the "unhewn" in these two senses simultaneously: "not-yet-valued-or-disvalued" and "disvalued." The term *Dao*, then, by directing attention to the neglected disvalued side of any value pair, simultaneously discloses the relation between the two sides, and the whole relationship, and their common grounding in the unnamable not-yet-evaluated substratum of both. In addition, the Dao retains its prescriptive sense, now in a somewhat unresolved paradoxical sense: it is the *course* to be followed in handling things. The text as we have it now, read as a whole, seems to recommend a freedom from the desire and knowledge of explicit values, as a means by which, paradoxically, to attain them spontaneously in their true, non-purposive, "stomach" forms, maintaining the relation of both sides of the value contrast by exalting the not-yet-evaluated/disvalued side of each apparent value dichotomy.

The *Zhuangzi* was traditionally regarded as the work of Zhuang Zhou (ca. 369–286 BCE), but is now regarded as the work of many hands, reflecting many distinguishable strains of early Daoist thinking.[3] The part of the text thought to come from Zhuang Zhou himself (the "Inner Chapters," or the first seven of the thirty-three chapters of the present version) takes the next logical step from the earlier Daoist preoccupation with the spontaneous bodily life over purposive cultural aims to a critique of the fixed valuation of even the concept of "life" itself, as part of the general critique of valuation and conceptualization in general. This is achieved by means of an intricate epistemological and linguistic agnosticism and perspectivism, rooted in insights into

the indexical nature of evaluative knowledge and language, their dependence on perspective, and the unceasing transformation of these perspectives.

All knowledge depends on a "this" as opposed to a "that," the defining of a system of coordinates. These terms are obviously indexical, that is, their denotation changes depending on what one is pointing to when they are uttered. But this defining of coordinates necessarily involves a value orientation that is equally indexical. Indeed, in ancient Chinese, the word for "this" and the word for "right" are the same (*shi* 是), a fact that Zhuang Zhou exploits extensively in his exposition of this point. Valuations depend on perspective, and perspective is constantly changing. This constant change of perspective is what is truly spontaneous, and its source is unknowable, since all knowledge is posterior to and conditioned by it. But this unknowable emergence of differing perspectives is itself regarded (in a now admittedly and unavoidably biased and temporary evaluative and cognitive perspective) as the Dao, the source, course, and stuff of all experience. This is embodied in a state of "forgetting," "mind-fasting," freedom from a fixed perspective or sense of self, and from any predetermined evaluative standard, allowing one to go along with all the varying value perspectives that emerge from it without cease. Zhuang Zhou calls this state the "pivot of Daos," "traveling two roads at once," or "the torch of slippage and doubt." The sage, says Zhuang Zhou, uses his mind like a mirror, accepting and reflecting everything (including every value perspective that might arise), but storing nothing. He gives the example of a monkey trainer who offered his monkeys three chestnuts in the morning and four in the evening. When the monkeys objected, he reversed the distribution, and they were all delighted, although their total ration remained unchanged.

The point is, first of all, that whatever happens, however things are arranged, it is all equally good; all is one, all things proceed from the same source, and thus are equally valued. Zhuang Zhou describes this as "hiding the world in the world." But this point falls victim to the perspectivism of its own premises, and so Zhuang Zhou undermines any substantiality to this "oneness." The ultimate point, rather, is that the emerging of each situation from an unknown source, and establishing itself as the perspective-defining "this," is the real oneness here, for it is this that is common to all things. The monkeys have their own value perspective, their own "this/that." The trainer does not inquire into the reasons for it—that would be futile, since he would be gaining knowledge only from his own perspective—or try to change it. He goes along with it, even while maintaining his own aloofness from it; he neither

adopts nor rejects their perspective, but simply follows along with it as another in a long chain of new perspectives that are always arising, and between which no single objective hierarchy can be discerned. Nor, indeed, does he try to convince them of the folly of their commitment to this one arbitrary perspective, so that they can learn to be free of it like him. He "travels two roads at once," guided by the "torch of slippage and doubt."

Zhuang Zhou addresses the paradox of his own perspective first by redefining knowledge as the state of mind of the sage, after having dismissed the possibility of reliable objective knowledge. He goes on to suggest in various ways how this stand-in for knowledge does all the jobs that knowledge was supposed to do, to the extent that they are possible at all, but better. For example, it allows one maximum success, in terms of any given value perspective that happens to be operative, in human relations, politics, artisanship, the old Daoist ideal of cultivation of bodily life, in governing, handling things, communing with things, and so on.[4]

It is notable that the figure of Confucius plays a humorously doubled role in this text, sometimes standing for the arch morality-and-knowledge-monger, sometimes as a spokesman for Zhuang Zhou's own ideas. This ambivalence toward the relation between Daoism and Confucianism is of great importance to the *xuanxue* project. The Dao and the spontaneity that is here called heaven (the incomprehensible process of ever emergent perspectives) are "crossed out" by Zhuang Zhou's agnosticism, even as he praises them: even "heaven" versus "man" (parallel to Laozi's "stomach" and "eye") is another "this/that," an indexical identification based on a perspective that has emerged from somewhere unknowable. Zhuang Zhou says, therefore, "How do I know that what I call heaven is not really man, and vice versa?" and it is this "how do I know?" that is the real "Dao" to which he wants to revert. There is no need to unify these appearances into a single consistent system or attach them to an overarching Dao in a positive sense. The True Man's one is one, and his not-one is also one: whether one sees things as one or as not-one, each is just an emergent "this," coming forth from an unknowable nowhere, and affirming itself. For Zhuangzi, there is a natural coherence entailed by each particular perspective, each "this," which involves both an implicit value (its "rightness") and a way of organizing things around itself accordingly. By following these various coherent values as they arise, one can flow along without contention in each particular case, and then go on to follow an entirely different noncontrived coherence when encountering the next "this." Each "this"

brings with it its own coherence, necessarily. This implies nothing about a single overriding system of "overall coherence" or "heavenly principle," singular. Zhuangzi's *tianli* is not what Xunzi 荀子 would later call "Great Coherence" (*dali* 大理). It is, rather, its ironic counterpart—the inescapable parody of overall coherence.

Hence, I propose the terms *ironic* and *non-ironic* to describe these two strains of understanding of terms such as "Dao" and "*li*" within Chinese thought. The non-ironic meaning of Dao is "a guiding discourse, tradition or practice"—the "Way" of swordsmanship, or governing, of heaven, etc.—an intelligible pattern that can be taken as a guide for behavior to attain something regarded in advance as valuable. *Li* in the non-ironic sense is the coherence of things which is valued and intelligible, "coherent" in the sense of "readable" and also "a sticking together of elements," combined with the sense of "valued." The ironic sense of these terms undermines the notion of *intelligibility* implied in them, while maintaining, ironically, the sense of *value*: the truly valuable coherence is one that is "incoherent," that is, unintelligible, one which cannot be known as such. The non-ironic notions lead to the Xunzian "Great Coherence," a single harmonious system of hanging together that is knowable, valuable, and uniquely orders the world as a whole. The ironic notion leads to a more complex picture of individual coherences, which need not add up to a single overriding, knowable coherence. In Wang Bi and Guo Xiang, we find two unique ways of combining the ironic and the non-ironic understandings of these terms.

The relation between "the" Dao, as a single overriding principle, and the specific principles of individual things, is given a new and systematic development in the commentary on the *Laozi* found in the "Jie Lao" 解老 chapter of the *Hanfeizi*:[5]

> Dao means that by [virtue of] which all things are as they are, where all coherences (*li*) join and meet, and become discernible.[6] Coherence means the patterns found in fully formed things, while Dao means that by which things come to be formed. Thus we say, Dao is what "coheres" them [i.e., separates and unites them]. Each thing is coherent, so they do not infringe upon one another. *Thus coherence is the limitation/cutting between things*. Each thing has its own different coherence, and the Dao joins together/makes intelligible the coherences of all things. Hence they necessarily transform. Because they must transform, none can maintain the same form of activity for long. Because of this, the energies of life and death are received from it, various types of wisdom are scooped and poured from it,

> various affairs arise from and collapse into it. . . . The Dao is wise with Yao and Shun, is crazy with Jieyu, perishes with Jie and Zhou, flourishes with Tang and Wu. . . . The real condition of the Dao, in all cases, is without any limit or special form of its own; *it is yielding and supple*, following along with the times, according with each coherence. When things die, it is by attaining this; when things are born, it is by attaining this. When affairs fail, it is by attaining this; when affairs succeed, it is by attaining this . . . . Coherences mean the divisions between square and round, short and long, coarse and fine, firm and fragile. Thus only when coherences are fixed can the Dao be attained. . . . It is contrasted dyads of long and short, large and small, square and round, firm and fragile, light and heavy, white and black that are called "coherences." When the coherences are found, things are easy to cut and tailor. . . .
> 道者, 萬物之所然也, 萬理之所稽也。理者, 成物之文也; 道者, 萬物之所以成也。故曰:「道, 理之者也。」物有理, 不可以相薄, 物有理不可以相薄, 故理之為物之制。萬物各異理, 而道盡稽萬物之理, 故不得不化; 不得不化, 故無常操。無常操, 是以死生氣稟焉, 萬智斟酌焉, 萬事廢興焉 … 道, 與堯、舜俱智, 與接輿俱狂, 與桀、紂俱滅, 與湯、武俱昌 … 凡道之情, 不制不形, 柔弱隨時, 與理相應。萬物得之以死, 得之以生; 萬事得之以敗, 得之以成。… 凡理者, 方圓、短長、麤靡、堅脆之分也, 故理定而後可得道也 … 短長、大小、方圓、堅脆、輕重、白黑之謂理, 理定而物易割也。… [7]

In this passage, *li*, coherence, is defined as the differentiating limits, or as the marking off of the two sides of each determinate dyad. *Li* are differentiating cuts, pointing to the limits and differences between things. "Dao" is the name for the totality that transcends these limits. For this reason, it is also used to denote the process of formation, while *li* are the specific completed formations. As is seen already in the *Laozi*, Dao means both the "course" or process and the "stuff" undergoing the process, the unhewn and the tendency to return to the unhewn. Dao is the process of becoming coherent; *li* is the coherences that result. These coherences are balanced proportions, quantitative measures and limits, proper proportions that make each thing what it is. As the last line of the citation stresses, this still very much implies a coherence with human purposes and desires; the coherences in things show where they can best be "cut" to suit human purposes.

Li here is very clearly construed as the quantitative/qualitative *limit* of X, beyond which it ceases to be X, is destroyed, becomes non-X. *Li* is the regulative division between the two members of a matched, inconstant pair. The Dao alone is constant (*chang* 常) and comprehensive, overreaching the limits in both space and time. It has more value

than value, it coheres more than coherence, it is more *li* than *li*, but for that reason it is unintelligible, and hence non-*li*, incoherent. It is in this sense that I speak of the mature Daoist tradition as "ironic": Dao is no longer a guiding discourse, practice, or tradition, as in earlier texts, but rather precisely the opposite—a guide that guides by giving no guidance.

It is especially noteworthy that, although this "compromise" position has much in common with what might be called the pre-ironic Daoism found in the "Neiye" 內業 and "Xinshu" 心術 chapters of the *Guanzi* 管子, one crucial difference leaps to the eye, which reveals to us the difference made by the intervening developments in Daoism, in the anti-Confucian tropes and ironic notion of Dao found in the received *Laozi*. The "Neiye" ("Inner Training") described Dao as what is gained in life and what is lost in death. The *Hanfeizi* commentary, on the other hand, tells us that Dao flourishes with the flourishing and perishes with the perishing; it is as present in failure, death, and insanity as it is in success, life, and virtue. It is what all these things, positive or negative, must depend on and attain in order to be what they are. We are told that the Dao is "supple and yielding" in that it follows the particular coherences of things—in the sage it is wisdom, in the fool it is folly. The Dao does not cause things to be wise or foolish, or to display any other particular coherence—to serve as a cause in this way would be to act as master, commander, being rigid and assertive rather than soft and yielding. Rather it is "attained" by whatever coherences are there, and accords with them, making them "coherent" but not determining which coherence they will be. When the text says that the Dao is the process by which they cohere, it means that the Dao provides only "coherence" as such, not the specificity of each particular coherence.

Where do these specific determinations come from? This problem had already been vaguely addressed in chapter 51 of the *Laozi*, which stresses the double status of the Dao in the ironic tradition:

> The Dao generates them; Virtue husbands them; things form them; tendencies[8] complete them. For this reason, all things honor the Dao and esteem Virtue. But the honoring and esteeming of Dao and Virtue are not brought about because someone commands them, but are always spontaneous. The Dao generates them, husbands them,[9] grows them, nourishes them, houses them, matures them, feeds them, shelters them. [The Dao] generates them without possessing them, makes them but without being depended on. It grows them without being their master. This is called the Dark [Unseen] Virtue.
> 道生之而德畜之，物形之而器成之。是以萬物尊道而貴[德]。[道]之尊、德之貴

[也], 夫莫之爵而[恒]自然[也]。道生之, 畜之, 長之, 育之, 亭[之, 毒之, 養之, 覆之。][生而]弗有也, 為而弗恃也, 長而弗宰也。此之謂玄德。

This passage begins by giving us a division of labor. The Dao merely generates; as for the specific forms of things, this comes from Virtue, things, tendencies—all activities derived from the agency of already formed individual things. Virtue is here somewhat like what the *Hanfeizi* commentary calls *li*, particular coherences, what each generated thing has "attained," its particular coherent form of continuance and function. So Dao, here as in the *Zhuangzi*, is just a name for indeterminate generation as such.[10] But if the individual determinacies all make themselves and are not commanded or determined to be so by the Dao, what is this Dao? It cannot be a determinate something at all, cannot even be said to have any intelligible content, even definitely to "exist" or "be there," and thus reduces into the "vague," ironic "Who?" But precisely because the Dao produces without owning, because it issues no commands on how it is to be used, because it is "soft and yielding" and accords with whatever use individual creatures put it to, will cohere this way or that at their pleasure, it is spontaneously honored by them in all their activities. Thus, the text goes on to contradict itself, delivering a typical Laozian ironic twist: it turns out that, precisely because the Dao does not account for the particular coherences, it does so: The Dao generates them, but also husbands them, grows them, nourishes them, houses them, matures them, feeds them, shelters them. The Dao does all the things that Virtue, things, and tendencies were said to do above, more or less. It does them by not doing them.

So who makes each coherence what it is? Literally, it would seem, just chance, circumstance, other coherences. But because each of these is generated by a non-commanding Dao, their deeds are also construable as the non-action/action of the incoherent coherence of the Dao. Dao is their stuff, their source, their end, and their tendency to revert into each other. It is what limits them in this sense, and this limiting is what determines what they are. The intervention of another thing to limit this thing is thus also readable as this thing's internal limiting of itself when it reaches its extreme, which is thus also readable as its inherent tendency to revert—which is the Dao.[11]

Li in Wang Bi: Integrating the Ironic into Non-Ironic Coherence

Turning to Wang Bi, we can perhaps identify what might be called a non-ironic incorporation of the ironic. Wang finds a way of bridging the

gap between the omnipresent, the great coherence, where the problem of unintelligibility is most pressing, and the individual coherences of particular situations and things, thus putting the ironic tradition to use in creating and predicting coherences. Wang does this by viewing each hexagram as a mini-cosmos with its own mini-Dao:

> The many cannot rule the many; the many are ruled by the fewest of the few. The moving cannot control the moving; all the world's motions are controlled by what is stable and unified [and thus still]. Thus it is only because their master necessarily makes them one that the many can coexist, and it is only because their source necessarily is not-two that all the various motions can proceed. Things do not happen haphazardly; they necessarily all proceed from their particular coherence ["principle," *li*]. There is a source and master that unifies them, an origin which brings them together. Thus they are complex but not chaotic, manifold but not confused. Thus the six lines of any hexagram in their mutual scrapings can be made intelligible by one [among them]. . . . For the scarce is what the abundant esteem; the few is what the many take as their source and master. When a hexagram has five yang lines and one yin line, the yin line is its master. If it has five yin lines and one yang line, the yang line is its master. For yang is what is sought by yin, and yin is what is sought by yang.
> 夫眾不能治眾, 治眾者, 至寡者也。夫動不能制動, 制天下之動者, 貞夫一者也。故眾之所以得咸存者, 主必致一也。動之所以得咸運者, 原必無二也。物無妄然, 必由其理。統之有宗, 會之有元。故繁而不亂, 眾而不惑。故六爻相錯, 可與一以明也 … 夫少者, 多之所貴也; 寡者, 眾之所宗也。一卦五陽而一陰, 則一陰為之主矣; 五陰而一陽, 則一陽為之主矣。夫陰之所求者陽也, 陽之所求者陰也。[12]

What is least in evidence in any situation, least visible in any hexagram, is the master of that situation, which truly determines its character. Like the Dao in the world, all things in that particular situation flow toward it, "seek" it, orient themselves around it. This is what gives it unity, consistency, what makes its parts cohere as this rather than anything else. This is its *li*, coherence. It is not the visible and intelligible coherence as such that is its real organizing structure. Rather, each situation has its *li* in what is least apparent in it, what it most lacks. *Li* here begins to function somewhat like the term *principle*, in that it is called the *zong* 宗 or ancestor of the situation, as principle is the "first form" or "beginning" of a thing in Aristotle. There is an immanent teleological element implied as well, in that Wang speaks of the hexagram lines as "seeking after"

their opposite, their master. Still, it is clearly not temporal priority that is meant by "source" here, and even "logical priority" does not seem to be an accurate description of what Wang has in mind. It is rather as if the Laozian Dao is particularized into the sixty-four hexagrams, with mini-Daos for each situation and thing.[13] These mini-Daos are called *li*. They are what order that situation, make it coherent, unifying it, make it intelligible, knowable as having this particular character. But they certainly do not bring it into being or generate it in the sense of an efficient cause, as might be said of Laozi's Dao. Moreover, they are unlike Aristotelian principle most centrally in that they do not rule except in the Daoist sense of not-ruling, by being scarce and invisible, by being the lacked object of desire sought by the rest, even if they are unaware of it, that is, even if it is their "stomach desire" that genuinely orients them. They are teleological only in this qualified sense, for an "object" of desire that is nonetheless invisible is the Dao, the correlate of "stomach desires." Wang says "scarce," of course, not "unintelligible," "invisible," or completely lacking, and this is what allows him to particularize his mini-Daos and put them to use. Coherence (*li*) had always implied value, as we have seen, and here this is incorporated into the "valuing" of the scarce line by the abundant lines, and by the ethical implications of the hexagrams. The *li* is what all the parts of the situation value, what they lack, what they want, and this is what makes them what they are.

The aspect of coherence as intelligibility is thus given a twist, in that any situation or thing can indeed be known, but only precisely as what it is not, what it lacks, what organizes all its parts around their desire for it. It can be known from the outside, in the context of a greater coherence, only as the particular "coherence" which generally names the whole hexagram, but this is precisely what it is not, what it lacks. An example from optics might be helpful here: When an object appears red to us, it is because that object is absorbing all the colors of the spectrum except for red; hence, the red is bouncing off it, rejected, reflected/deflected outward to our eyes. Hence, the way it appears externally is an index of exactly the opposite of what it contains. The color that it "has" least of internally is the color that it, as a totality seen from outside, "is."

The twist to the one-many relationship is along the same lines: all "principles" are the same principle—nothingness, lack—but different, in that they are holes in different things. In the *Hanfeizi* commentary, the knowable *li* were opposed to the unknowable Dao. The *li* were the individual coherences of particular things and situations, their finiteness, their limits, while the Dao was the limitless, the overflowing of

all limits. The former were knowable, describable, coherent, while the latter was unintelligible, incoherent. The incoherent Dao was what made the coherent *li* what they are, and also what undermined them, but the determinacy and the indeterminacy of the two sides of the relationship remained very clear-cut. Wang has devised a way of bringing the indeterminacy right into the heart of the determinacy, so that they are no longer opposed, no longer two different things. Rather, the way in which the unintelligible causes the intelligibility has become immanent; the absence of what is lacking is the presence of the present. From the outside, it is intelligible as X; from the inside, everything is oriented around non-X. "Xness," in all its specificity, means precisely "the ruling presence of non-Xness as its absence." This is a huge and decisive step in the integration of the ironic and non-ironic traditions.

For Wang Bi, the nothingness—the unintelligibility—of the Dao has taken on a new, more vital, structuring function. It doesn't just let itself be shaped; rather, it is the center of gravity of the shaping process, the process of converging and cohering. Each *li* is the Dao of its situation. The *Hanfeizi* commentary already hinted in this direction with its claim that the Dao is what makes *li*, or what forms the divisions between things, but this is still depicted as a vague process of mitosis in the context of the overall orienting and cohering activities of the Dao in its relation to the world as a whole. These individual coherences are the by-products of the global course of rise and return which is the process of the Dao in the world, fully present in them only in the ironic sense pertaining to its nothingness, its unnameability: the "whole" nothingness is present in each particular in the form of its yielding to it, allowing the particular's name to be affixed to it. For Wang Bi, on the contrary, it is not just "the" Dao that makes coherences; it is "Daoishness," that is, whatever aspect of the situation is playing the Daoish role of being the least, the most invisible, the lowest. The entire quality of Daoishness is now fully, not partially, present in and as each situation.

Tang Junyi's 唐君毅 comments on Wang Bi's approach in the *Zhouyi lüeli* are particularly useful for our purposes here. Tang notes:

> This passage on "Illuminating the Judgments" originally comes simply from an attempt to say that in interpreting a hexagram one should stress the whole hexagram's essence, and seek out its smallest and most condensed line as the ruling line, and thus makes the point that all things have their *li* which serves as "a source and master that unifies them, an origin which brings them together." People always try to speculate about what this *li* is, but this approach does not

accord with Wang Bi's text. Actually, if we read this text carefully, we can see that this *li* is precisely "the many tending toward the few, the abundant tending toward the least, the complex tending toward the simple" itself. This "tending toward the few and the simple" is precisely "tending toward the master, toward the origin." We need not seek any other *li* to serve as the "master that unifies them, the origin which brings them together." Thus when Wang Bi says, "Things do not happen haphazardly; they necessarily all proceed from their particular *li*," he means that the reason a particular thing is actually like this or like that is because of the principle (*li*) of "the many tending toward the one, the abundant tending toward the few, the complex tending toward the simple and thus interacting and converging." Guo Xiang, in his commentary to Zhuangzi's "Dechongfu" [chapter] says, "Things do not happen haphazardly; they are all the coming together (*hui* 會) of Heaven and Earth, the convergence (*qu* 趣) of the ultimate coherence (*li*)." This comment, explaining *li* in terms of convergence (*huiqu*), precisely grasps Wang Bi's idea, and serves as good evidence for my claim here. Precisely this convergence is what makes a thing what it is. It is also what makes an activity or event what it is. . . . It is unnecessary to go beyond this master or origin and try to think about a single original *qi* or heavenly deity, or any objectively existing metaphysical substance, or a self-subsistent metaphysical principle, to serve as this master or source of things. The things or events formed by this tendency of the many converging toward the one and so on are each individual concrete events and activities, that is, concrete situations, like the "difficult" situation described in the *Tun* hexagram. But this situation, or any situation, is always a single convergence, "a many tending toward a one, an abundance tending toward the few, a complexity tending toward a simplicity." But in calling it a convergence, we note that it possesses a singularity, which constitutes its fewness or its simplicity. Whenever people look squarely at a situation as a whole, they always unify it, reduce it to fewness, simplify it, which is to say, they unify it in a single master or source, and thus know the *li* or principle that it comes from. This *li* is just "what it comes from," just as Dao is a "what things come from." Where we find the sense in which it is a motion "from" the many to the few, "from" the abundant to a one, "from" the complex to the simple, we find the *li*, the principle, the Dao of Change. Thus we can say that this "fromness" resides in neither the complex nor in the simple, not in the one nor in the many, not in the abundant nor in the few. . . . [14]

Tang's point about *li* is extremely important: for Wang Bi, *li* is not that which controls these convergences, or a separate realm of the One, but rather a way of describing these concrete processes of convergence toward the least represented element in each situation. "One" here is not *the* One, but the lowest number, the least. There is not any single "One," then, but rather a different one, least, simple, implicit in any situation, which structures that situation. "Ones" are multiple, not one. Commenting on Wang's commentary to the *Xian* hexagram, Tang brings out further that for the male and female to interact, the male must temporarily abandon his maleness and take the role of the female (e.g., in humbling himself to go forth and receive his bride).[15] This sort of reciprocity, convergence, interactivity is the locus of *li* for Wang, which is thus different in each situation, and manifest in a multitude of ways along with the multitude of situations. There are many *li*, each serving as a miniature Dao for that particular situation.[16]

It is most significant, then, that here and elsewhere Wang speaks of *li*, coherences, in the plural, in spite of his interest in the encompassing, the omnipresent Dao. This is the contribution made by his interest in the *Zhouyi*, which here combines with the Laozian influence to create room for the individual coherences and principles of particular things, which are at once both situational expressions of the single universal Dao and differentiated, particular principles, the sixty-four hexagrams. It is perhaps significant in this connection to note the predominant use of *li* in its *verbal* sense in Wang's commentary to the *Laozi*. Combined with the overall sense of the noninterfering and nonintelligible universal coherence of Dao, as variously expressed in particular things and events, this brings to the fore the sense of "reciprocal ordering" in the use of *li* as a verb, connected closely with the sense of "balance," which can be noted in the concept of *li*-coherence throughout the tradition. The Dao makes coherent by not actively making anything coherent, by not interfering, so it is evident only in the mutual making-coherent of individual things. Hence, Wang says, "Heaven and Earth follow the self-so, doing nothing and creating nothing. The ten thousand things thus naturally order and limit each other/make-each-other-coherent (萬物自相治理). Thus [Heaven and Earth] are described as 'not benevolent.' . . . When one abandons himself and goes along with the things themselves, all of them are ordered/made coherent (棄己任物則莫不理)."[17]

The connection of this to the ironic tradition's *problematik* of intelligibility is made clear in a comment to chapter 15 of the *Laozi*: "When darkness is used to order (*li*) things, they attain their brightness (*ming* 明)." That is, when they are not forced into coherence from above,

when no overall coherence is evident interfering with them and working to make them cohere, they attain their particular intelligible coherence through spontaneous mutual limitation. The ironic is assimilated to the non-ironic here: the unintelligible *li* is what makes present the particular intelligible *li,* or rather, the unintelligible *li* of each situation—its least visible aspect—is what makes it intelligible as this situation. The use of the darkness to make-bright and make-cohere means allowing the process of convergence around the unseen, least present element.

This verbal sense of the term allows us to understand Wang's occasional use of the *nominal* sense of the term in this commentary. "I do not force others to follow, but rather use their self-so, adducing their own perfect coherence (用夫自然,舉其至理). Following it necessarily leads to good fortune, while transgressing it necessarily leads to bad fortune" (commentary to *Laozi*, chapter 42). The *li* of each thing is its self-so, *its* way of cohering and converging. But in this usage we see *li* used in a way that is amenable to the "Great Coherence" of the non-ironic tradition, as the overriding principle that one must know to operate effectively, to attain one's value, and as an object of understanding. Elsewhere in the commentary, Wang even states, "The Dao has a great constancy, and coherence has a great consistency (道有大常, 理有大致). . . . If one can attain the place things tend toward (*zhi* 致), they can be known through consideration even if one does not go forth to them. If one recognizes the ruling ancestor (*zong*宗) of things, the coherence of their right and wrong (是非之理) can be attained and named even if they are not seen."[18] Here we see the connection to Wang's conception of *li* as the mini-Daos of the particular hexagrams in the *Zhouyi*: the principle of a thing, as a noun, an intelligible object of knowledge and understanding, is this thing it lacks and tends toward, which rules its motion, its own mini-Dao, which discloses its own right and wrong, the values implicit in it. One attains one's own desires, in accord with one's own standard of right and wrong, by going along with this inherent right and wrong of the things themselves, their own values, their tendencies to seek the thing they lack. This tendency toward the opposite of itself is the grounding for the verbal use of the term as reciprocal ordering. We see this also in the comment to *Laozi*, chapter 79: "If one does not comprehend the *li* [i.e., does not make the coherence intelligible, *bu ming li* 不明理], one's contractual agreements will cause great resentment." That is, the violation of the rights and wrongs of those with whom one enters into agreements will lead to resentment. The *li* in question here is what the parts of the situation lack and want. This determines what they consider right and wrong.

We can see here the Zhuangzian following of the self-so as the perspectival self-rightness (*shi* 是) of each being or situation, as in the story of the monkey keeper alluded to above, incorporated into an overriding conception of Great Coherence derived from the non-ironic tradition.

The Coincidence of Ironic and Non-Ironic Coherence in Guo Xiang

With Guo Xiang, we come to a real turning point, a kind of limit case where the ironic and non-ironic traditions converge into something like what physicists call a "singularity." It is no longer possible to speak of either an ironic appropriation of the non-ironic, or vice versa, for in Guo the idea of non-ironic definite coherence as such and of ironic unknowable coherence come to be identical. For the first time in Chinese thought, we can state directly that coherence as such is incoherence as such, that determinacy and indeterminacy are strictly synonymous. The term *li* is central to this development, and here its two opposed directions converge: it means both absolute division and complete unity.

In purely quantitative terms, we see in Guo's work an exponential increase in occurrence of the character *li* per se: according to Kitahara Mineki's 北原峰樹 concordance, a total of 174 occurrences, far outstripping the occasional usage in Wang Bi or in the *Zhuangzi* text upon which Guo is commenting.[19] I am in full agreement with Mizoguchi Yūzọ 溝口雄三 that Guo's usage of *li* marks a decisive watershed in the development of the tradition, but my interpretation of this sea change is directly opposed to the position taken by Mizoguchi, who sees it as denoting an immanent determinative principle within each thing. This interpretation, which is shared by many modern interpreters who see Guo as positing something called "the Nature" or "the Principle" of each thing as what makes it what it is, clashes sharply with Guo's insistence that there is no ruler of things, no Dao that makes things so, as well as Guo's specific statements about what this "Nature" or *li* actually refers to. Mizoguchi is aware of this problem, and tries, following Togawa Yoshio 戸川芳郎, to solve it simply by saying that, while Guo denies an *external* determinative principle controlling things, he posits in its place an *internal* one. But this solves precisely nothing: as long as there is a determining of one thing (entity, aspect, determinate something) by another, a relationship of control and determination, we have, strictly speaking, an "external" relationship, for these two entities are by definition "external" to one another. To speak of an internal principle which determines *something else* about the thing in question is a failure to think through the meaning of "immanence" of *li*

to things themselves, which Mizoguchi correctly identifies as one of the most distinctive contributions of Six Dynasties thinking, particularly that of Guo Xiang. Mizoguchi thus ends up admitting that the sense of "principle" as an independent agent in Guo's usage of *li* is "still very weak," overshadowed by the stronger sense of patterning and ordering, but this leads to an even starker contradiction with Guo's antimetaphysical immanentism in that Mizoguchi claims that this ordering is accomplished by an absolute substance of some kind.[20]

The problem with all such interpretations is that they completely misunderstand the meaning of the term *ziran* in Guo's thought. Guo takes Wang Bi's reconfiguring of the Dao-*li* relation a step farther—whereas for Wang, full Daoishness comes to operate as the very coherence of each individual situation, for Guo, the *li* is the situation itself. It is strictly synonymous with *ziran*, which is not a principle but the equivalent of the empty tautological phrase, "The way it is." Its function is not to provide an explanation of anything, nor to denote that which determines or controls anything. It is rather precisely the opposite, a way of asserting the uselessness and impossibility of any such explanation, and why we humans are better off relinquishing any attempt to find one.

This has been poorly understood in recent studies of Guo's thought. Many readers have been misled, I believe, by the fact that Guo tells us ad nauseam that each thing has its own "nature" (*xing* 性, perhaps better translated here as "determinacy"), "allotment" (*fen* 分), "limits" (*ji* 極)—and also, it would seem, its own *li*. The first three terms come to be more or less synonymous in Guo's usage. In fact, they give us precisely the meaning of Guo's usage of the term *li*. Perhaps forgivably, many scholars have taken these terms to have their more usual meaning here: a *fixed* nature, allotment, limit, or principle that serves as the determining underlying character of a thing, persisting over time and standing behind the phenomenal flux of appearances. This is seen to be Guo's substitute for the Dao as "creator." Guo's virulent opposition to any metaphysical unity or Absolute would make him the least likely candidate for the use of *li* in the "Great Coherence" sense. And it is this resistance to the concept of a single, overriding, synordinate cosmos that Wing-tsit Chan and others have correctly intuited in claiming that Guo emphasizes not the one, but the many. Indeed, Guo does often unambiguously speak of what appear to be "principles" (*li*) in the explicit or implied plural, for instance, in the expression *wanli* 萬理, "ten thousand principles," or when he uses it as a parallel with *wu* 物 (things) or *shi* 事 (events). In this sense, we must admit the truth of Chan's claim, at least superficially. As Guo says,

> What [Zhuangzi] calls leveling—why should it require making their forms and shapes uniform, all matching the same compass and T-square? Thus vertical and horizontal, ugly and beautiful, things ribald and shady and grotesque and strange, each affirms what it affirms, each considers acceptable what it considers acceptable, and thus although there are a thousand differences between their various principles/coherences (*li*), they are one in attaining and being right in their own determinacies, thus [the text] says, "The Dao unifies them all."
> 所謂齊者, 豈必齊形狀, 同規矩哉? 故舉縱橫好醜, 恢恑憰怪, 各然其所然, 各可其所可, 則理雖萬殊而性同得, 故曰道通為一也。[21]

In this sense, it is correct to note that *li* is used in the plural, and denotes for Guo Xiang the multiple *li* of individual things.

But this view, of fixed individual natures or principles that stand behind existent things, determining them, is quite insupportable. Guo tells us explicitly, again and again, that what a thing "encounters" (*yu* 遇) *and* what it "does" are in exactly the same boat when it comes to the "nature" or "*li*" or "limits" of the thing—they are both internal to it, and *neither can ever be changed*. What one encounters is just as unchangeable, and in the same sense, as what one does and what one is, as one's *li*. This refutes the idea that there is some internal principle behind the flux of an entity's experience making it what it is. This can be seen from the fact that the insistence that the limits, nature, *li,* and allotment of a thing can never be changed is matched by his equally shrill insistence that everything is constantly changing, instant by instant, to the point where even identity is not continuous between moments: the former me is not the present me: "The previous I is not the I of the present moment. 'I-ness' moves along together with the present moment; how could one constantly hold on to the old? (向者之我非復今我也。我與今俱往，豈常守故哉?)" (Ibid., 244). There is no particular content to selfhood, either as a Nature or as an "immanent" Principle which remains the same behind its changes and which would therefore determine what those changes are. Rather, "selfhood" is purely a form, meaning whatever is going on at the present moment, regarded as "self" in Guo's distinctive sense of *the self-so*. Thus, Guo says, of the various changes that might be encountered *or* actively produced, "I 'self' them all . . . and hence there is no loss of selfhood. . . . since there is nothing I do not consider myself, the inner and outer are obliteratingly unified, past and present are strung along one thread, I am daily renewed along with all changes; how could I know wherein resides my 'self'? (吾皆吾之⋯ 未始失吾 ⋯ 靡所不吾也，故玄同外內，彌貫古今，與化日新，豈知吾之所在也？)."[22]

The self in question here is the self-*so*, which means, as we shall see, simply whatever is going on right now apart from what is made so by either objectified objects of knowledge or deliberate acts of will. It is not an unchanging, "original" Nature that persists beneath appearances. Even *being* some particular thing, for example, a human, is itself "just one encounter amongst the ten thousand changes (人形乃是萬化之一遇耳)."[23] The idea of a metaphysical essence, or set of multiple essences, behind changing things that makes them what they are or makes them change as they do would also make a hash of Guo's insistence that each principle is self-so—indeed, *ziran*-ness itself, as we shall see—and reestablish the same metaphysical quandary cited by Guo to overthrow the notion of the Dao as a real entity, a creator, or an actual source of all things. So on the one hand the nature, limits, or allotment of each thing can never be changed; but on the other, everything is constantly changing. How is this apparent contradiction to be resolved?

The answer is surprisingly simple. A "thing" is, as with Zhuangzi and Wang Bi, a situation. For Guo, this idea is radicalized: the situation lasts only one moment: it is an "encounter." It has certain limits. It is an eternal fact. That I am here doing this right now at this exact moment in time and nothing else cannot be changed; by the time I am aware of it, and exert my will toward it, it is already gone. This means it is what it is, and it can never *be* changed. It can transform into something else, and it must transform, but it cannot *be* transformed. That is, it can never be the object of deliberate or determinate alteration brought about by some other thing, some other situation. Guo regards all knowable objects, all non-ironic coherences, as "traces"—the effect of one spontaneous event or moment on another, held over due to erroneous valuation and thereby potentially disturbing the second entity's self-so nature, its own character, limits, allotment, coherence.

Any arrangement of determinate entities into a greater, synordinate whole, for example, as a discernible causal nexus, would be, for Guo, merely projection of this illegitimate epistemological confusion, based on the imposition of one moment onto another, creating aspiration, purpose, will, and valuation, all of which he calls "knowing" (*zhi* 知) and its concomitant, deliberate doing (*wei* 為). Before knowing comes to know the situation in this sense, it is a "vanishing merging" (*ming* 冥) of all things, of the encounter itself. "Vanishing" means it is unknowable as a determinate object, because it is entirely within its own limits. Merging means that all of heaven and earth are involved in producing it, not as determinate objects of consciousness, but simply as the prereflexive coming-together. Guo says:

> [A]lthough man's body is small and insignificant, it takes all of heaven and earth to collectively offer it up. Thus of the ten thousand things in heaven and earth, each entity cannot lack any one of the others for even one day. If even one thing were not present, then whatever comes to be would have no way to come to be. If even one coherence (*li*) failed to arrive, then its heavenly years would have no way to reach its proper end. But knowing (*zhi*) does not know everything that is present in the body, and doing (*wei*) does not accomplish everything that is kept in coherence. Thus what knowing knows is little but what the body possesses is much; what doing does is few but what coherence keeps is many. . . .
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> . . . 雖區區之身, 乃舉天地以奉之。故天地萬物, 凡所有者, 不可一日而相無也。一物不具, 則生者無由得生。一理不至, 則天年無緣得終。然身之所有者, 知或不知也; 理之所存者, 為或不為也。故知之所知者寡而身之所有者眾, 為之所為者少而理之所存者博 …。[24]

This perfectly conveys the ironic concept of coherence: unknowability, convergence, and value. As in Wang Bi, knowing pertains to what a thing is for-others, the outside, and *li* to what it is to-itself, the inside. Here as there, these two are directly and perfectly opposed. But for Guo the outside is the realm of "traces" and is always mistaken and pernicious. All determinate content without exception falls into this category. The inside has no determinate content at all: it is the self-so, which is the strict antithesis of the traces, what is so outside of the interference of knowing and doing. This is *li*: whatever is not known or done.

We can see how easily this notion could be confused with an idea of objective truth or real principles independent of the subjective. Here we have the advent of a further implication of the term *li*, which was to have great influence in subsequent Buddhist usages: *li* as potentiality. Since *li* is defined in opposition to knowing and deliberate action, whatever is present—converging to be present here—but is not explicitly known to awareness is *li*. If we add the sense of value always associated with the term, we have here the derivation of the idea of *li* as an unrealized potential for the value, something that is present but as yet unutilized. This is of course not far from the earliest stratum of nominalized meaning of the term *li*: those fault lines, among all that may be present in nature, which, if cut along, create a coherent—i.e., intelligible and valuable—object. Those perforations are present, but as yet uncut. Hence, the *li* is present, the value is "here," but it is unrealized until *li* in the verbal sense—the selective cutting—is applied to it.

Indeed, for Guo *li* means precisely "the cut," the limitation of the event. Because it is limited, it is not infringed on by anything else, and hence is self-so. It is called *li* because it is divided out from all else, is absolutely singular, and also, as we will see, because it is of value for us to pay heed to this aspect of the situation. It is called "the nature" because it cannot be changed—by knowing and doing. The term *nature* is here used in its usual sense, as we see also in the *Xunzi*: it is the opposite of purposive activity (*wei* 為) or the artificial (*wei* 偽)—hence, Guo also sometimes calls it the "genuine nature" (*zhenxing* 真性). Whatever happens without purpose and unmotivated by purposive knowing is the nature. It is neither within nor without, and makes no distinction between what is encountered and what is emitted. It is called "the allotment," which also means "division," (*fen*), because it is just this much and no more. It is called the limit because it is finite. Its "nature" (*xing*) is its "limits" (*ji*) is its "allotment" (*fen*) is its "coherence" (*li*)—which is this thing—this situation, this encounter—itself. Each thing has its own limits, its own nature, its own allotment, its own coherence; but once purposive knowing and doing are eliminated, this "having" of limits is simply being self-so, and the self-so is the real pre-trace "self" of any event, its vanishing merging: "I self whatever I encounter." Guo speaks repeatedly of "merging with the time," "merging with change," "merging with things," "merging with one's own nature," "merging with one's own allotment," "merging with one's own limits," "merging with whatever one encounters," and these expression are strictly synonymous. To vanishingly merge with whatever one encounters is to vanishingly merge with one's own nature, with one's own limits, with one's own allotment. In this sense the term *the nature* or *the coherence* is an ironic empty term for Guo, just as "Dao" or "nothingness" is. The Dao is literally nonexistent, and thus ultimately, like "heaven and earth," "a collective name for all things."[25] Similarly, the Nature, the Coherence, the self-so, is really nothing more than a collective name for all encounters, all vanishing merges, all particular events themselves.

Guo pushes this one step farther: after making the distinction between knowing/doing/traces on the one hand and the self-so/determinacy/limits/vanishing on the other, he annuls it at a higher order of abstraction:

> One cannot do by "doing" doing. Doing does spontaneously. One cannot know by "doing" knowing. Knowing knows spontaneously. It is just this spontaneous self-so knowing, and thus it is really non-knowing. Thus knowing comes out of non-knowing. It is just this spontaneous self-so doing, and thus it is really non-doing. Thus doing

> comes out of non-doing. Doing comes out of non-doing, and thus non-doing is the master. Knowing comes out of non-knowing, and thus non-knowing is the source. Thus the True Man discards knowing and yet knows; he does not do and yet does. Things are self-so generated, attained through sitting and forgetting. It is for this reason that the name "knowing" is cut off and the term "doing" is discarded.
> 夫為為者不能為, 而為自為耳。為知者不能知, 而知自知耳。自知耳, 不知也, 不知也則知出於不知矣。自為耳, 不為也, 不為也則為出於不為矣。為出於不為, 故以不為為主。知出於不知, 故以不知為宗。是故真人遺知而知, 不為而為。自然而生, 坐忘而得, 故知稱絕而為名去也。[26]

Here, Guo is asserting that even doing and knowing are themselves self-so. One cannot decide to decide, one cannot deliberately determine to have a deliberate purpose. This would lead to an infinite regress of the kind Guo rejects in his critique of a creator. One just spontaneously finds oneself having deliberate purposes and making decisions. I cannot abstain from deliberate purposes and actions, from making choices; even to abstain from making a choice is itself a choice. This consideration is sometimes adduced to demonstrate the ultimacy of freedom and choice. Guo accepts this premise but draws the opposite conclusion: since whether I choose or do not choose I am in either case actually choosing, I have no choice: I cannot but be choosing, and therefore I cannot choose between choosing and not-choosing. I am not free to decide to be free. Because I am "condemned to be free," my freedom is itself a spontaneous fact not of my choosing. Hence, even when I am doing, I am really, ultimately, non-doing, and even when I am knowing, I am really, ultimately, non-knowing. This means there is no need to actually eliminate knowing and doing, or to change one's behavior in any way whatsoever. The acknowledgment of the *li*, the self-so, is simply a noticing of this second-order spontaneity that pervades even my deliberate activity and knowing, a focusing on a different level of the doing and knowing itself. To focus on the self-so aspect of any situation, the beyond-knowing-and-doing process that it is, its vanishing convergence that cannot go outside itself to any external objects of knowing or goals of doing, its limitedness to its own limits, even in its doing and knowing, is to know its *li*, no more and no less.

This is why, although Guo can speak of many *li* or of the one *li* of the self-so, he means the same thing in either case. In no way can these *li* or this *li* be spoken of as "principles." When we probe more deeply into what is actually meant by these "principles," we find that in all cases they resolve immediately into a single principle, that is, the self-so,

and given our definition of what a "principle" is, this makes the "many principles" claim deeply problematic. We also find Guo using the term *li* frequently in the sense of an intelligible object of knowledge, again smoothly but misleadingly translatable as "principle." But examining the context and implications again, we find that the principle to be so recognized is always the principle of "self-so," *which in Guo reclaims the sense of ultimate unintelligibility*.

The full irony of the term is restored here. The *ziran zhi li* 自然之理 which one is called upon to recognize is not "the coherence of the self-so" in the sense of "the way nature hangs together spontaneously," except in the limited sense of the reciprocal ordering and reciprocal limiting of entities in individual cases. That this can never become a single univocal synordinate system of Great Coherence is made clear by Guo's notion of "lone-transformation" (*duhua* 獨化), a permutation of *ziran*, which however is also identified without trouble as "the *principle/coherence* of lone-transformation" (*duhua zhi li*). The "coherence of self-so" is multiple; we are to recognize *each* thing's self-so. And as it transpires, a thing's self-so is none other than that thing itself; it is its true self, the very process of its becoming what it is without intending to and without reference to any intelligible causal matrix, efficient or final. The thing that fits into the causal nexus, or hangs together with other things, is not the real thing itself, not its self-so; it is rather its "trace," which is the way this process of spontaneity impacts on other spontaneities, other moments, other beings. The thing itself is not even a "thing": it is just the self-so, and no further predications can be made about it. All predications about things, and all the more so about principles describing the ways in which things are related to each other, are by definition a matter of the traces, which are a distortion of the reality of the self-so.

The self-so is in this sense described as a "vanishing" or "merging" into things, which is also a vanishing of the identifiable individual "things" themselves—that is, of their traces. A principle, in the normal sense of the word as used in ordinary English speech, would have to be a reliable linking of at least two entities, a way of predicting a replication or a constancy. What applies to one entity only is not a principle. Guo Xiang's "*li*" is thus not a principle. But it is a *li* in the normal Chinese sense, for *li* means a coherence not only in the sense of a coming together, but in the sense of something that can serve as an object of consciousness, and which is worth paying attention to, inasmuch as it will lead to the optimal way of relating to that thing. Here, however, there is only one thing to know, and it is precisely the effacement of any possibility of knowing of principles in the ordinary sense. The absolute

uniqueness of each individual thing means that its principle collapses into itself; this does not amount to multiple principles, but no principles at all. If asked why something is the way it is, Guo would answer like one of Vonnegut's Tralfamadorians: "There is no why. The moment is just structured that way." This "structure," which is the very opposite of an answer to "why?" is what Guo means by *li*.

In the context of Guo's overall philosophy, we often find him speaking of *ziran zhi li* in a way that does superficially suggest that he is providing some sort of an explanation for why things are so. For example, we find him telling us that "it is a self-so *li* that there are some things that are brought to completion by the accumulation of habitual practice."[27] Or again, "It is a self-so *li* that there are also some things that require smelting and forging to become implements."[28] But it is important that we do not allow the form of these pronouncements to confuse us as to what is really being intended here. For when Guo tells us such things as—"It is the *li* of the self-so that all things follow each other," and the like—he is really not trying to give a reason why these things are so but rather to reject the very possibility of giving a reason for them. This is made clear in the following passage, among many others:

> It is a self-so *li* [i.e., a fact of things with no explanation, *ziran zhi li*] that when one moves, a shadow follows, and when one speaks, an echo follows. When one smoothly follows along with things, traces in the form of names are established; but he who was going along with things did not do it for the name. Not doing it for a name is perfection, but ultimately the name could not be avoided; who then could release him [from this consequence]? Thus names are shadows and echoes; and shadows and echoes are the fetters of forms and sounds. When one understands this, the name-traces can be done away with; once this is done, the esteeming of others can be cut off, and once this is done, one's own nature and life can be kept whole.
> 顧自然之理，行則影從，言則嚮隨。夫順物則名跡斯立，而順物者非為名也。非為名則至矣，而終不免乎名，則孰能解之哉？故名者影嚮也，影嚮者形聲之桎梏也。明斯理也，則名跡可遺；名跡可遺，則尚彼可絕；尚彼可絕，則性命可全矣。[29]

The point of recognizing that this is a "self-so principle" is not to understand its inner structure so as to allow us have a clearer grasp of the relations between things in the world, or to utilize it in terms of some teleological project of our own, as is the case for the non-ironic usage of *li*, and indeed even for Wang Bi's synthesis of the ironic and

non-ironic usages. Rather, it is to allow us to abandon any attempt at an explanation, or of fitting this thing into an account of the universe as a whole, or indeed to make it "cohere" into any kind of whole at all. It is to allow us to "follow along" with things, and thus keep our own nature and life intact, which means to preserve the self-so-ness of one's own present determinacy, which is indeed for Guo the only thing really worth doing. By dropping all attempts to locate particular things within a global matrix of meanings and explanations, we eliminate any value implications of the thing, any need to either emulate or avoid it, which is what would disturb our own self-so.

This is true even when Guo seems to be asserting a global orderliness or necessity pertaining to the universe as a whole; here too the purpose is to free us from the need of assigning meanings and values of things. For freedom from the assigning of meanings and values is the only way really to attain value, which is what the recognition of a Principle is supposed to do, thus giving us a perfect example of the ironic notion of *li*. For example, Guo asserts:

> The principle of things is inherently right, and cannot be avoided. Man, in being born, is never mistakenly born, and whatever there is in his life is not there senselessly . . . . Thus whatever is not encountered cannot be encountered, and whatever is encountered cannot not be encountered; whatever is not done cannot be done and whatever is done cannot be not done; thus we give all things over to their self-rightness.
> 其理固當, 不可逃也。故人之生也, 非誤生也, 生之所有, 非妄有也。… 故凡所不遇, 弗能遇也, 其所遇, 弗能不遇也; [凡]所不為, 弗能為也, 其所為, 弗能不為也; 故付之而自當矣。[30]

The point here is not to assert the rationality of the cosmos for its own sake; rather, it is given in the last line of the citation: seeing this fact about things allows us to give all things over to their self-rightness, and thus preserve our own self-rightness. Seeing *li* accomplishes value; but the particularities of the structure of the thing or situation are irrelevant: what is truly *li*, namely, the coherence that it is valuable to focus on, that allows one to deal with things in the ideal way, is always the same: the self-so. In this sense, Guo Xiang really recognizes only one *li*.

There is, however, a sense in which Guo Xiang does seem to address specific principles. In a small number of cases, and in a manner that can be described as very ad hoc, Guo appears to be invoking the term "*li*" as the explanation for some specific connection between facts in the world, something that is closer to a "principle" or "account," which

actually serves as a determining law and can be used to explain some fact. In this sense, we can discern the sense of *li* as "division," its older sense, and the one which so many scholars single out as distinctive to Guo's position. For example, we find Guo saying, in explanation of the differences in the natural habitats of massive Peng and the little birds who ridicule him in Zhuangzi's first chapter:

> This is all to explain that Peng flies so high only because of his huge wings. A being of small substance cannot depend on the large for its support, and *thus* a being of large substance cannot depend on the small as its provisions. *Thus principles have their perfect divisions; things have their fixed limits*. Since each is sufficient to the task at hand, the assistance they respectively provide to these beings is equal.
> 此皆明鵬之所以高飛者, 翼大故耳。夫質小者所資不待大, 則質大者所用不得小矣。故理有至分, 物有定極, 各足稱事, 其濟一也。[31]

I have highlighted two items in this citation. The parallel between "principle" and "things" does indeed suggest that both terms should be read in the plural. The principle of entity A would here seem to differ from the principle of entity B, with a "perfect division" between them, just as these two entities themselves have a fixed limit between them. But the "division" can also be understood as what lies between limits, to wit, a role (*fen*). In this sense, we might perhaps venture to interpret the first four characters as still referring to *li* in the singular, namely, *ziran*: "*Li*, the self-so, has perfectly continent roles and divisions within it." That would mean, it is self-so, "principle," for things to be perfectly different from one another, not that there are separate principles for each thing. This is what makes Guo's odd "thus," also underlined in my translation, significant. For he does not just state that "the large need large things, the small need small things," but rather that "because the small need small things, therefore (we can infer) the large need large things." This "thus" actually refers to the same principle being operative in both cases, just as the "assistance" to the two types of beings is equal, as stated at the end of the citation. This is the *only* kind of hanging-together of the world that Guo acknowledges; not an array of individual, knowable principles, but rather the same operation performed over and over again. Because one thing is self-so, we can deduce that another thing is self-so. This is the true application of what we would call a "principle," but it turns out to be an ironic principle: the principle here is always the same principle: the self-so, which means no-principle.

Guo makes this explicit, employing the traditional terminology of root and branch, but in such a way as to make eminently clear the negligibility of specific principles:

> The root includes the branch, just as the arm includes the hand. If the body as a whole is harmonious, all the individual joints will be at ease; if the way of heaven goes smoothly, then both root and branch will be unobstructed. Thus as soon as we have the single [*li* of] non-doing, all the many *li* are simultaneously adduced.
> 夫本末之相兼, 猶手臂之相包。故一身和則百節皆適。天道順則本末俱暢。一無為而羣理都舉。[32]

This could perhaps be read to imply that these many principles are all present in the one principle of the self-so; but in fact Guo's point is reductive. There is no need to bother with the other *li*, for the "self-so" covers them all. It is what all so-called principles resolve into, and indeed all that provides the "principle-ness" of any principle. It is all one needs to know.

In this connection, we should consider the following passage:

> Nothing but the dark ocean would be sufficient to move his body; nothing but ninety thousand miles would be sufficient to support his wings. How is this worth considering strange? It's just that a big entity is necessarily self-born in a vast location, and a vast location will necessarily self-generate this vast entity. This principle is definitely self-so; one need not fear it failing to be the case. So what need is there to work one's mind through these things?
> 非冥海不足以運其身, 非九萬里不足以負其翼。此豈好奇哉? 直以大物必自生於大處, 大處亦必自生此大物, 理固自然, 不患其失, 又何厝心於其間哉。[33]

Here again we may be tempted to consider this a statement about a definite, particular principle about things in the world, which differs from other principles. This would be a justified inference, particularly given Guo's use of the robust "necessarily" (*bi* 必) and his unusual reversal of the terms *principle* and *self-so*, such that the former is the subject and the latter an adjectival description of it. Usually, for Guo, *ziran* is the more substantial and prior term. Here, however, principle is something that is described as self-so, which gives the impression of hypostasizing principle in a stronger sense. This impression is strengthened by Guo's revelation of what it means for a principle to be "definitely self-so": it is a reliable predictor; one need not fear it failing to be the case. All these factors suggest definite individual principles.

However, Guo's characteristic insertion of the modifier "*zi*" self, a shorthand for self-so, before the crucial verb (to generate), complicates this picture considerably. We can interpret this to mean that a large place "naturally" or "spontaneously" or "self-so-ishly" generates a large entity. But Guo's use of this term, as I have argued elsewhere,[34] has a more intricate significance; this *zi* is the true self of the being in question, it is "self-generation" when it generates "self-so-ishly," because its real self is just the process of vanishing of any determinate self into the traceless process of self-so itself. "A big place" is not the true self of a big place, but rather just the "traces" of the big place on *other* entities. The generation of a big entity there is really not a linking of two distinct entities, but a revelation of the self-so, that is, the true, indeterminable self of both. In this sense, it cannot be a principle in the strict sense, in that a principle must reliably link the behavior of at least *two* genuinely distinct entities. The real import of Guo's invocation of this "necessary" principle is thus not to provide a reliable guideline for making deductions, but rather to put an end to any such deductions, and this is exactly indicated in the last line of the citation: the upshot of knowing that a "self-so principle" will never fail to be so is not that one should thus use this as a guideline for making predictions, or for refining one's thinking process, but to assure one that there is no need to worry about it. A *li*, by being self-so, means the end of thinking about it; it leads *away* from intelligibility, not toward it.

Of particular interest for understanding this point is Guo's unusual use of *li* together with a modifier, which seems to point to specific principles. The three most notorious examples are *renli* 人理, *heli* 和理, and *woli* 我理, denoting, respectively, the principle/coherence of human beings, of harmony, and of the self. In all cases, these are ad hoc coinages glossing a phrase from the *Zhuangzi*; *heli* is used when the text says something about harmony (*he*); *renli* when the text speaks of humanity, for example, in contrast to heaven; and *woli* is used as a gloss on a text referring to the self. For example, commenting on, "Thus it is not sufficient to distort his harmony" (故不足以滑和), Guo says, "If one understands that one's own character and life are necessarily right, then through all the thousands and ten thousands of changes, through life and death, success and failure, one remains blandly oneself, and possesses the principle of harmony (*heli*) within himself" (苟知性命之固當，則雖死生窮達，千變萬化，淡然自若而和理在身矣).[35] The other examples all follow this ad hoc pattern.

Nonetheless, we find Guo making some interesting assertions here:

> Each thing attains its Way, and the principle of harmony (*heli*) spontaneously fits it comfortably (物得其道，而和理自適也).[36]

> Knowledge without doing does not harm one's tranquility; tranquility combined with doing that comes of its own accord does not harm knowledge. This can be called their mutual nourishing [of knowledge and tranquility]. When these two nourish each other, how could the allotment of the principle of harmony (*heli*) come from the outside?
> 知而非為則無害於恬, 恬而自為則無傷於知, 斯可謂交相養矣。二者交相養則和理之分, 豈出佗哉?[37]

"The principle of harmony" here seems to be simply a synonym for "harmony," a way of nominalizing the concept of harmony. But we could equally say that harmony is joined with *li* here as a kind of synonymous binome; the two terms are meant to mean the same thing. That is, when the text says *he*, Guo wants us to know that this harmony is just what he means by *li*, the self-so. "The principle of harmony," in brief, is just a word for the self-so itself.

A more likely candidate for an individual principle is the term *renli*. Guo says:

> In terms of the self-so, there is no difference between great men and petty men. But in terms of the principles of humanity itself (*renli*), he who depends on heaven may be called an exemplary person.
> 以自然言之, 則人無小大; 以人理言之, 則侔於天者可謂君子矣。[38]

Here a contrast is clearly being made between the self-so (or the heavenly) and *another* principle: the principle of man as such. In terms of the self-so, principle as such, there are no distinctions of greater and lesser value: all are equal, because all are equally self-so. But here Guo introduces another standard by which things might be judged. Explaining Zhuangzi's own expression of praise, he gives an explanation. "Human principles" would seem to denote what is truly valuable to man himself, that is, what is "coherent with" human interests, what is conducive to optimal human experience. And what is it that is the human principle? It is to recognize the self-so, which means precisely to "follow heaven." In terms of the self-so itself, it makes no difference whether or not we recognize or live according to the self-so, or ignore it and get lost in the traces. Both of these are equally self-so, both of these are equally self-right. The only difference between them is how they affect *us*. What is healthy for humans is "human principle," which means not only *being* self-so (which is in any case unavoidable), but *recognizing* the self-so as a principle, which means to see the futility of all principles, all explanations. "Human principle" means to free oneself from emulation of

traces, abandon all value judgments and explanations of the causes or purposes of things, follow along with the self-so. Once again, we find a convergence between an individual principle and the sole real principle, the self-so. This is also the singularity, the convergence, of the ironic and non-ironic senses of coherence, or determinacy and indeterminacy. Hence, Guo says explicitly: "If one moves in accordance with the heavenly nature, then the human principle (*renli*) is also kept complete (任其天性而動，則人理亦自全矣)."[39] The human "principle" just means what is best for humans to attend to, and this is nothing more than the spontaneity of things, the uselessness of all attempts to know any specific principles pertaining to them.

This is in keeping with the "root-branch" metaphor cited above, and is equally reductive. Guo certainly will allow for the legitimacy of what we would call "human principles"—such as the divisions between ruler and subject, father and son, and the like, in other words, conventional morality, which Guo elsewhere calls *mingjiao* 名教, the teaching of names. But that is, arguably, not what he means by *renli* here. Rather, whenever he uses this term, he links it to the human accord with the overriding "principle," principle proper, the self-so. Attention to the self-so will make specific human relationships function smoothly; hence there is no need to pay any special heed to them as principles in their own right. They are not worth noticing, and hence are not *li*.

This same reversal from the particular to the universal is found in Guo's use of an even more particulate sounding term, *woli*, the coherence or principle of the self: "When one turns back and holds to the principle of self (*woli*), this principle of self spontaneously penetrates all."[40] It would seem as if the "principle of self" might be a specific individual principle. But the conclusion points us right back to the self-so: the principle of "selfness," its truth, is just its self-so, which means its lack of intelligibility, its freedom from the causal nexus of explanations and principles that constitutes the world of traces. This is why the principle of self "spontaneously penetrates all" other entities, for each of them has only this one "principle," the self-so, as its true being.[41]

Concluding Remarks

As against the impression that Wang Bi focuses on the one while Guo Xiang focuses on the many, then, we have seen that in an important sense it is truer to say that it is Wang Bi who develops a theory of distinctive individual principles of things, while Guo puts forth one sole *li*: the self-so, *ziran*. On the other hand, as we have also seen, Guo does wish

to stress that each thing has its own distinctive *li*, which would seem to translate into an idea of individual "principle." However, as I noted at the beginning of this chapter, a truly *unique* principle is no longer a principle at all. It is a way of denoting the thing in question itself, its true, unknowable, pre-traceable self, the process of self-so. Hence, we must take exception to the standard interpretation of the difference between Wang and Guo on the question of oneness and manyness. Our analysis here shows that just the opposite is closer to the truth: for Wang, there are many actual, specific principles, the mini-Daos embodied in the hexagrams, which determine the nature of qualitatively different situations, while for Guo, there is really only one *li*, one coherence-worth-noticing, namely, the self-so of any situation of thing.

We can also see now the justice of Tang Junyi's citation of Guo's gloss on Wang's statement that "things never happen haphazardly," from which Tang extracts his crucial term *convergence* (*huiqu*). This applies most directly to Wang Bi's understanding of *li* as the mini-Dao of any situation, the convergence toward the "least," which is also the valued or the desired. But for Guo Xiang too there is an important idea of convergence. The self-so, for Guo, is the operation of all things in separation from their "traces," the objects of consciousness left by one self-so occurrence on another. Any type of "convergence" pertaining to these traces—i.e., anything knowable and determinable—would be for Guo a "small" *li*, the non-ironic *li* of individual things, that is, explanatory connections elucidating cause and effect, or ends and means relationships. The real principle, the self-so, is the contrary of this, the omission of all reference to traces. But this too is a kind of convergence: an ironic convergence. This is what Guo calls "vanishing (into)" (*ming*) which is indeed a kind of coming together, but one that effaces the specific identities of individual entities above and beyond their self-so, which is at once the most general and the most uncompromisingly unique in each case. So the real principle (self-so) is the absence of all so-called principles, and the real convergence (vanishing into each other) is the absence of all so-called convergences (interconnections between traces). The real Dao is the non-Dao, and the real value is the absence of all valuation. *Li* means a convergence that is intelligible and important to notice for the attaining of value. But for Guo it is an ironic convergence, an ironic intelligibility, an ironic noticing, and an ironic value. Principle is one in the sense of none. This is why Guo's "one" seems so much like a "many." And indeed, it does point to an emphasis on individual uniqueness pushed to the point where no principle is any longer possible, nor indeed any discernible identifiable differences (traces). This is why Guo's "many" seems so much like a "one."

Notes

1. Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 317.
2. In stressing this sense of the term Dao, I am in partial agreement with Chad Hansen's controversial view that the term is to be understood in its usual sense, as a guiding discourse, even in the apparently metaphysical pronouncements of the classical Daoist texts. See Chad Hansen, *A Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992). I am at odds with Hansen's view, however, in that I do not think the term is to be understood *exclusively* or even *primarily* in this sense here, as will be clear in what follows.
3. The two most powerful attempts to classify the strains of thought in the text are surely those of Angus C. Graham, *Chuang-tzu: The Seven Inner Chapters and Other Writings from the Book Chuang-tzu* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981) and Liu Xiaogan, *Classifying the Zhuangzi Chapters* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1995). These two scholars agree that most of the traditional "Outer" and "Miscellaneous" chapters are not the work of Zhuang Zhou. They differ in that Liu considers them all the work of actual followers of Zhuang Zhou, and in the way they divide the remaining chapters according to philological, stylistic, and philosophical characteristics. Liu divides the remaining chapters into three distinct groups: the "Transmitters," the "Huang-Lao School," and the "Anarchists." In contrast, Graham's categories are the "School of Zhuangzi," the "Syncretists," the "Primitivists," and the "Yangists." Within the "School of Zhuangzi" writings, closely comparable to Liu's "Transmitter School," he further distinguishes a "Rationalizing" and an "Irrationalizing" strain, and in both cases considers a significant philosophical departure from Zhuang Zhou to have occurred here, a position I share, as will become apparent below.
4. For a fuller exposition of my interpretation of the *Zhuangzi*, and my arguments for reading this controversial text in this way, see my article, "How Many are the Ten Thousand Things and I?" in *Hiding the World in the World: Uneven Discourses on the Zhuangzi*, ed. Scott Cook (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 33–63.
5. Scholars disagree about the authorship of this commentary, whether it comes from the same author as the rest of the *Hanfeizi* text, and whether the thought expressed therein is compatible with the Legalism of the rest of the *Hanfeizi*. It has been suggested that it is a work of Hanfei's early years, or that it comes from another brush entirely. The facts of the matter, if we had them, would certainly be helpful in interpreting the text; given the distinctive Legalist reading—some would say twisting—of other Laozian themes, we might indeed wonder whether the interpretation of the Dao and its relation to *li* in this text can really be taken as representative of the ironic tradition. In fact, Hanfeizi's Legalism in general can perhaps

be considered a non-ironic appropriation of ironic motifs. But the passage under discussion here provides a valuable window into the way the terms Dao and *li* are to be related, in a way that seems to develop the line of thinking we have seen in the above ironic appropriations of non-ironic motifs.

6. The term *ji* 稽 is sometimes glossed as meaning "coming together" (cohering) and sometimes as "examining" (becoming intelligible). I include both meanings here, in line with the internal connection we have discerned between intelligibility and coherence in the tradition so far.
7. Wang Xianshen 王先慎, *Hanfeizi jijie* 韓非子集解, *Zhuzi jicheng* 諸子集成 edition (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1954), volume 5, 107–8. Emphases added.
8. *Shi*, as in the Wang Bi text; but the Mawangdui 馬王堆 text B has "*qi*" 器 utensils or palpable objects, which also works here.
9. I am following the Mawangdui texts here, both of which lack the character *de* in this line, so that Dao remains the subject for the verb "to husband," in contrast to the first line of the chapter, where Dao is what generates while Virtue is what husbands. The other two agents listed in the first line—"things" and "tendencies"—drop out here in all versions of the text, which might be taken as support for the Mawangdui reading, but in either case the point is the same; although the verbs "to form" and "to complete" are not used, which are what was done by "things" and "tendencies" respectively, their function seems to be covered by the following six verbs: to grow, to nourish, to house, to mature, to feed, to shelter. These are simply another way of describing the process of being "formed" and "completed," but when looked at not as the actions of things and tendencies, but of Dao and/or Virtue, the latter in any case being the presence of the formlessness of the Dao in the formed thing. What matters is the double vision of agency: on the one hand things and tendencies make things what they are, but on the other precisely in so doing it is Dao (and/or Virtue) which, by not doing so, is making things what they are.
10. As the "Qiwulun" chapter puts it, "The heavenly piping blows forth the ten thousand differences, allowing each to be itself. But since they all choose themselves, who is the blower?" *Zhuangzi yinde* 莊子引得, Harvard-Yenching Institute, *Sinological Index Series, Supplement No. 20: A Concordance to Chuang Tzu.* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), 3/2/9.
11. So, *li* and related terms throughout the *Laozi* tradition signify the limit beyond which a thing reverts. This notion of reversal when a thing reaches its "limit," combines a notion of balanced measure with an idea of reciprocity, the mutual limiting of individual things.
12. Wang Bi, *Zhouyi lüeli* 周易略例, "Ming tuan" 明彖, in *Zhouyi zhushuo ji buzheng* 周易注疏及補正. *Shisanjing zhushu* edition (Taipei: Shijie, 1987), 1–2.
13. Cf. Tze-ki Hon's discussion in this volume, which emphasizes that for Wang Bi, the sixty-four hexagrams point to discrete situations.

14. Tang Junyi, *Zhongguo zhexue yuanlun: yuandao pian* 中國哲學原論: 原道篇, volume 3 (Taipei: Xuesheng, 1986), 336.
15. Ibid., 350–53.
16. Unfortunately, Tang backpedals a bit on his interpretation, reverting to the "single Dao" interpretation of Wang Bi, which he compares to the trackless space in which airplanes or birds may fly, but which is not for that reason the path of airplane or bird. On this reading, Dao is once again transcendent to individual situations, unaffected by them, a single encompassing universal emptiness in which many different particulars may come and go. See ibid., 370. But I would like to claim here that Tang would have done better to recall his own interpretation of "emptiness" and "oneness" in his discussion of Wang's hexagram interpretation and applied this to his understanding of Wang's *Laozi* commentary. Indeed, the idea of oneness as "the least" rather than as "the all-encompassing One" is already present in the *Laozi*, but with a stress on the "least" in the world as a whole, rather than to each situation. This allows this "least" to *also* serve, ironically, as the all-encompassing One. In the same sense, the "least" in any situation, since it structures the whole situation, is what is all-encompassingly present in that situation, what that situation appears to be "when viewed squarely as a whole," as Tang puts it. Indeed, Wang even describes this coherence of what a situation wants but is not, what it tends toward, in the full ontological sense as "the coherence that makes it what it is" (所以然之理): "When one recognizes the motion of things, the coherences (*li*) that make them what they are can all be attained" (*Zhouyi zhu* 周易注, "Qian" 乾, "Wenyan" 文言, in *Zhouyi zhushuo ji buzheng*, 3). That is, the convergence around what is lacking in them is the *li* that makes them what they are. The *li* is both this process of converging and this least-present element, just as Laozi's Dao was both the unintelligible background of raw stuff and the process of reverting to this raw stuff.
17. Wang Bi, *Laozi zhu*, ch. 5. *Zhuzi jicheng* edition (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1954), volume 3, 3. The same sentiment, stressing the ironic sense of ordering as non-ordering, or the true overall coherence as simply the reciprocal ordering, limiting, making coherent of individual things, is found in Wang's comments to *Laozi* chapters 36 and 38.
18. Ibid., ch. 47.
19. As cited in Mizoguchi Yūzọ "Liqi lun de xingcheng" 理氣論的形成, translated by Li Changli, in *Zhongguo guannian shi* 中國觀念史, ed. Yuan Shuya (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji, 2005), 154.
20. Ibid.
21. Guo Qingfan 郭慶藩 ed., *Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋 (Taipei: Muduo, 1983), 74. This work will be cited hereafter as ZZJS.
22. Ibid., 277.
23. Ibid., 245.
24. Ibid., 225.
25. Ibid., 20.

26. Ibid., 225.
27. Ibid., 257.
28. Ibid., 280.
29. Ibid., 206. See also ZZJS, 156.
30. Ibid., 213.
31. Ibid., 5.
32. Ibid., 406.
33. Ibid., 4.
34. See my *The Penumbra Unbound: The Neo-Taoist Philosophy of Guo Xiang* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003).
35. ZZJS, 213.
36. Ibid., 471.
37. Ibid., 549.
38. Ibid., 273.
39. Ibid., 638.
40. Ibid., 855.
41. We may have noticed in these usages a kind of two-tier structure, where *li*-proper is the self-so as such, and X-*li* is X considered in its self-so nature. I insist that *li* always means self-so because it is the self-so-ness of X that makes it a *li*. But this can then be applied on any level to any particular thing, for each is indeed the self-so. We have here an incipient version of the problematic of the one and the many in later Chinese Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism, most famously the Huayan-Tiantai "one is many" idea and derivatively Zhu Xi's 朱熹 (1130–1200) notion that there is only one principle—the Great Ultimate—which is, in its entirety, also manifest in each thing, as the particular individuating principle of that thing, which defines both its character and its inner teleology. We can perhaps discern the contours of a similar way of thinking, *mutatis mutandis*, in Guo's use of the idea of the "perfect" or "ultimate principle," literally the "arrived principle" (*zhili* 至理). See, among many other examples: "At the point where principle reaches its ultimate, outside and inside [the realm of social rules] vanish (into) one another; there has never been one who roams outside [i.e., in the self-so] who does not at the same time vanish (into) the inside [i.e., morality]. Thus the sage constantly roams outside the realm to vanish (into) what is inside it, following along with existence with no deliberate mind, and hence although his body is waving about all day long, his spirit and breath remain unchanged, looking above and below along with ten thousand different circumstances, and yet calmly constant and self-like" (ZZJS, 99). Or again, "Although the sequence of precedence and following is the work of man, it comes from within the perfect principle [of the self-so], and is not the doing of the sage" (ZZJS, 470). This "perfect principle" is contrasted with any more local or limited type of principle, that is, what would normally be called a *li* by someone besides Guo Xiang. The perfect *li* is what is like those *li* (a

coherent and intelligible coming together, a harmonizable harmony, which can lead to value if harmonized with, i.e., recognized), but more so, what really does what the term *li* promises. This is the standard move of the ironic tradition: the real Dao is the non-"Dao," the ultimate *li* is the non-*li*. It is significant that this term is also reversed, suggesting that "perfect principle" also means the "full arrival of principle" (*lizhi* 理至). Perfect principle is *ziran*, in relation to any lesser particular principle. But here again, the point is the collapse of all *li* into this one *li*. Hence, we find Guo saying, "Just go along with allowing it to be itself, and the *li* will arrive of itself." And again, "The perfect *li* is exhausted in self-attainment" (ZZJS, 72), the latter phrase being another mutation of self-so. In all these cases, the "perfect *li*" is self-so, which is precisely non-principle, the negation of what would normally be called a principle. This is what leads to vanishing "self-cohesion," "self-attainment," and so on, all of which are synonyms for value here. By recognizing a principle, one attains value. To recognize the perfect principle is to ignore all other so-called principles. In doing so, one attains value—the arrival of principle (*li* as value).

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5

The Sage without Emotion

Music, Mind, and Politics in Xi Kang

Ulrike Middendorf

One of the main issues in *xuanxue* 玄學 debates during the Zhengshi 正始 era (240–249) of the Wei dynasty (220–265) concerns whether or not the sage experiences emotion. Increasing interest in the emotions as the interface between the inner world of desires, goals, and plans, and the outer world of objects and events was evident already in the sociopolitical discourse of the late Warring States period and the Han.[1] The Zhengshi debate is rooted in this tradition, but offered a sharper focus and fresh arguments. While the contributions of He Yan 何晏 (190–249), Wang Bi 王弼 (226–249), and Zhong Hui 鍾會 (225–264) to this debate have been generally recognized,[2] those of three other major *xuanxue* scholars—Ruan Ji 阮籍 (210–263), Xiahou Xuan 夏侯玄 (209–254), and Xi Kang (also pronounced Ji Kang) 嵇康 (223–262)[3]—have been somewhat neglected. One reason is that these thinkers presented their argument about the emotional nature of the sage in a sub-discourse that addresses at first glance a very different topic—namely, music and sound. However, a closer look at Ruan Ji's "Yue lun" 樂論 (Discourse on Music), the fragments of Xiahou Xuan's critique of it, the "Bian 'Yue lun'" 辯樂論 (Disputing the "Discourse on Music"),[4] and Xi Kang's "Sheng wu aile lun" 聲無哀樂論 (Discourse on Sounds/the Sage without Grief or Joy) suggests that they were equally concerned with the emotions of the sage, which in this light must be regarded as a broader intellectual discourse, crossing the borders of philosophical theorizing and political criticism.

In this discussion, I am specifically interested in the argument of Xi Kang. Placed in the larger framework of *xuanxue*, I propose a rereading of the "Sheng wu aile lun" (hereafter *SWALL*) as a lecture on music,

mind, and politics vis-à-vis the hypothetical and actual crisis of state and society at that time. This departs from previous interpretations of the essay. It also invites reconsideration of Xi Kang's place in the *xuanxue* movement. Following Tang Yongtong's 湯用彤 (1893–1964) influential, yet difficult and controversial definition of *xuanxue*—with two main currents centering on Wang Bi's "ontology" of *wu* 無 ("nothingness") as the "substance" (*benti* 本體) of the "ten thousand kinds of things" (*wanwu* 萬物) on the one hand,[5] and Xiang Xiu's 向秀 (ca. 221–300) and Guo Xiang's 郭象 (ca. 252–312) emphasis on *you* 有 ("[there-]being") and "independent transformation" (*duhua* 獨化)[6] on the other—Xi Kang has been relegated to the margins of that tradition. Further, Xi Kang's belief in the generative forces of heaven (yang) and earth (yin), his strong emphasis on *ziran* 自然 ("that-which-is-of-itself-what-it-is" or "self-so"),[7] his interest in "nurturing life" (*yangsheng* 養生), immortality, aesthetics, and his alleged antiritualism—as the leader of the iconoclastic "Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove" (*zhulin qixian* 竹林七賢)[8]—have been seen as closer to Han cosmology or religious Daoism than to the "metaphysical" interest of mainstream *xuanxue*. Finally, Xi Kang is commonly associated with the teaching of "names and principles" (*mingli* 名理).[9] This, too, should be reexamined.

Presented in the form of a debate between a "Guest from Qin" (*Qin ke* 秦客), who advocates traditional Confucian views of music, and the "Host of Dongye" (*Dongye zhuren* 東野主人), alias Xi Kang, who refutes them, the *SWALL* contains perhaps the most insightful analysis of human emotional responses to sound and music written in early medieval China.[10] It anticipates central questions of modern music aesthetics, music psychology, emotion theories, and philosophy of mind. Possibly owing to this fact, the strong sociopolitical message of the work has been largely overlooked. Although it was recognized that the essay deals with more than musical theory or aesthetics,[11] it is nonetheless often regarded as a classic on music as an independent art, divorced from morality and politics.[12] It has also been considered in the larger context of nurturing life,[13] and as a means of philosophical exploration into the Dao beyond the thickets of language.[14] Nevertheless, it cannot be said that Xi Kang's contribution to the question of the ideal sage and the emotions as well as his views concerning the "big questions" of *xuanxue*—the limits of language, perception, and knowledge, and the metaphysical problems of existence and nature of universals—has been fully acknowledged.

Punning perhaps on He Yan's thesis that "the sage is without delight or anger, grief or joy" (聖人無喜怒哀樂), the title of Xi Kang's essay

exploits the etymological and conceptual link between *shēng* 聲 *syeng* < *hleŋ, "sound," and *shèng* 聖 *syengH* < *hleŋ-s, "sage."[15] An in-depth analysis of Xi Kang's essay strongly suggests a link to the ongoing debate about the emotional makeup of the sage; in other words, it is about not only "sound" but also the "sage's not having grief and joy." Moreover, it reinterprets from a Daoist perspective the set of orthodox concepts and metaphors, which in Confucian thought relates music, mind, the state, and the cosmos to one another.[16] In this transposition, the "sage" (*sheng* 聖) figures as the "harmonious sound" (*hesheng* 和聲), and hence as the *one* who secures free development of *all* "underheaven" in accordance with the "ordering principles of *ziran*" (*ziran zhi li* 自然之理). Thus defined, the "sage" and the "harmonious sound" become metonymic metaphors of the Dao, mutually completing each other, the one as its embodiment, the other as a blend of its elusive formlessness and namelessness.

In what follows, I begin with a summary of the processes of metaphorization that underlie the mappings across the domains of music, mind, the state, and the cosmos. Next, I focus on three thematic issues, (1) language, (2) the mind and other minds, and (3) the problem of the one and the many. These issues address indirectly problems of government, such as deceit in politics through abuse of language, corruption in the recruitment of officials, and factionalism. Finally, I consider Xi Kang's vision of an ordered world, which appears to amalgamate the Confucian vision of music as the art of self-completion with Daoist *ziran*.[17] Musical perfection, crystallizing in harmony, comes to stand for the idea of an embodiment of ritual and social boundaries so complete that the individual, in effect, is no longer bound by them, but finds himself in spontaneous accord with whatever circumstances that may arise.[18]

Why Music Matters

Chinese musical thought from an early stage was closely tied to ritual, the individual and collective mind, the state, and the cosmos. Familiar with the arguments of the Confucian canon and other writings, third-century *xuanxue* thinkers were keenly aware of music's centrality to these core concerns. In *SWALL*, the "Guest from Qin" puts forward the traditional, Confucian view of music, very roughly, that it carries the emotions of both the composer and the musician, and imparts these same emotions to the listener to various degrees depending on the listener's skill or sensitivity. Xi Kang, as the "Host of Dongye,"

argues instead that music does not carry any emotional content and meaning in itself, nor does it *cause* emotions in others. Rather, music *releases* emotions that are already present in the listener. Although Xi Kang accepts certain aspects of traditional music theory, a close reading of *SWALL* shows that he radically challenges some of its key premises, the most fundamental of which is that music is a system of signs, like language, embedded within a network of interconnected sign systems manifested in the *yinyang wuxing* 陰陽五行 (yin-yang and five phases/elements) matrix. Xi Kang's criticism questions the assumed control of the world by "language-and-sign-givers," who see themselves as being in command. At the heart of his suspicion is the purposeful semantization and metaphorization of music and its concomitant bearings on politics. To appreciate what Xi Kang is trying to do here, it would be helpful to review briefly the way in which music came to be identified with the state, and how metaphorically music and notes were understood as government and government agencies, respectively.

Music is found in every known human culture, past and present. It is incorporated into a vast array of human activities, from religious services to solitary enjoyment. While there are cultural variations, the properties of music are that of sound as perceived in time and processed by people. So music denotes structured sounds produced directly or indirectly by humans, often varying in pitch, timbre, and rhythm. In Confucian musical thought, "sound" (*sheng* 聲), "tone" (*yin* 音), and "music" (*yue* 樂) signify different stages of refinement and describe the development of music from nature to culture.[19] The Confucian ideal of music is thoroughly cultural, in both the aesthetic sense of high art and the social sense of a way of life. "Music" in its most advanced form, combining voice, instruments, and dance in a synthesis of the arts, possesses virtue (*de* 德), and is characterized by a heightened sensitivity to beauty. As music is deemed orderly and pleasant to hear and to see, it was thought to be able to reach and move humans, spirits, and animals alike.[20] Most important, in this context, is the assumption of traditional Confucian musical theory that sounds are born in the "human heart (mind)" (*renxin* 人心).[21] This establishes a direct link with the "emotions" (*qing* 情) rooted in the heart (mind) as well.[22] Similar to some modern emotion researchers,[23] early Chinese philosophers recognized the presence of emotions not only by observable evidences—e.g., actions, physiological reactions, and people's statements about them—but also by nonobservable variables, such as subjective emotional experiences, person-environment relationships, and coping and appraisal processes. They recognized, too, the enormous motivational force of the emotions, positive as well as negative, and

knew that emotions presuppose certain sorts of cognitions or have them as their necessary conditions. "Aroused" ("stimulated," "influenced," *gan* 感) by external "things" ("objects," "entities," *wu* 物), the heart (mind) was set in motion. There was the belief that desires and emotions disrupt one's original tranquil nature. Conceived of as psychophysical energy *qi* 氣 ("ether," "pneuma," "vapor," "breath," "air"),[24] human beings would waste away their life force if swayed by the myriads of affections. This called for emotion control and restraint, and the sages thus urged moderation. Bridging the "inner" (*nei* 内) and the "outer" (*wai* 外), "breath" in the form of musical sound together with sung poetry became the medium expressive of emotions and states of minds par excellence.[25]

In the *Xunzi* 荀子, the metaphorical mapping of music and emotion onto the state and cosmos is particularly well developed. A passage from the "Yue lun" 樂論 (Discourse on Music) chapter makes this explicit:

> Music is joy; it is something human feeling certainly cannot avoid.[26] Thus, man cannot be without joy, and joy will certainly be expressed in sounds and tones, and take form through movement and rest. Moreover, it is the way of man that in sounds and tones, movement and rest, [all possible] variations of the path of his nature are fully exhausted. Thus, man cannot be without music, and music cannot be without form. However, if form does not take the proper Dao, then there cannot but be disorder. The former kings disliked such disorder, and thus designed the sounds of the *Elegantiae* and *Hymns* to guide [mankind]:[27] they made their sounds sufficient to be joyful without being carried away; made their patterns sufficient to mark distinctions without seeming to be forced; made their [*gestalts* in terms of] winding or straight, intricate or simple, fading or full, restraint or advancing sufficient to stir and set into motion humans' virtuous hearts (minds), so that depraved and muddy energies would have no place to gain a foothold therein.[28] Such was the method of the former kings in establishing their music/joy.
> 夫樂者, 樂也。人情之所必不免也。故人不能無樂, 樂則必發於聲音, 形於動靜, 而人之道, 聲音動靜, 性術之變盡是矣。故人不能不樂, 樂則不能無形, 形而不為道, 則不能無亂。先王惡其亂也, 故制雅頌之聲以道之, 使其聲足以樂而不流, 使其文足以辨而不諰, 使其曲直繁省廉肉節奏, 足以感動人之善心, 使夫邪污之氣無由得接焉。是先王立樂之方也。[29]

Rhetorically effective, Xunzi's polemic against the Mohist rejection of the Confucian concept of music sets out with a powerful proposition:

"Music is joy."[30] The claim derives its persuasive force from the etymological and conceptual unity suggested by the written character 樂. In Old Chinese, the pronunciation of *yuè* 樂 *ngæwk* < *N-lla^{w}k, "music," *lè* 樂 *lak* < *lla^{w}k, "pleasure, to please" ("joy, happiness"), and *yào* 樂 *ngæwH* < N-lla^{w}k-s, "to rejoice," were quite close. That music ought to be pleasurable seems to be an idea rooted in ancient ritual performance.[31] The remarkable effects of music are attributed to its morphology, which contains a natural hierarchy that according to this view should exist in society as well. In this hierarchy, all music is based on a prime note, setting the pattern for the other notes. In a political context, the ruler is the prime note, who sets the pattern for his ministers, people, and all human affairs. Musical order implies political order. Conversely, loosing musical order brings about disorder of the state and destruction, as the "Yue ji" 樂記 (Record of Music) chapter of the *Li ji* 禮記 notes:

> *Gong* is the ruler;[32] *shang*, the minister; *jue*, the people, *zhi*, affairs, *yu*, things. If these five [notes] are not disorderly, then there are no disarrayed and inharmonious tones. If *gong* is disorderly, then [music] is disorganized; the ruler is arrogant. If *shang* is disorderly, then [the music] is slanted, the ministers are corrupt. If *jue* is disorderly, then [the music] is depressed, the people are resentful. If *zhi* is disorderly, then [the music] is grievous, the affairs are overburdening. If *yu* is disorderly, then [the music] is precarious, the wealth [of the state] is depleted. If these five are all disorderly, and transgress upon each other in turn, this is called dissolute. If it is like this, then the extermination and passing away of the state will occur in no time at all.
> 宮為君, 商為臣, 角為民, 徵為事, 羽為物。五者不亂, 則無怗懘之音矣。宮亂則荒, 其君驕。商亂則陂, 其官壞。角亂則憂, 其民怨。徵亂則哀, 其事勤。羽亂則危, 其財匱。五者皆亂, 迭相陵, 謂之慢。如此, 則國之滅亡無日矣。[33]

Within this framework, stimuli find constant expressions in specific responses, and music/emotion is morally significant; similarly, signs and their meanings in the various domains enjoy a high degree of constancy, a stable relationship governed by *yinyang wuxing* schemes. Xunzi brings out further the cosmic dimension of this grand edifice:

> Such are the images (*xiang*) of [instrumental and vocal] music: the drum [is] vast grandeur; the bell, wholesome fullness; the chime stone, modest control; the large and the small mouth organ, stern harmony; the *guan* and the *yue* flute, wild ferocity; the ocarina and *chi*-flute, rising mist; the large zither (*se*), soothing kindness; the small zither (*qin*), feminine grace; the singing, clear fulfillment; and the spirit [i.e.,

> the actual though unstated sense or significance] of dance joins with the Dao of Heaven.
> 聲樂之象: 鼓大麗, 鐘統實, 磬廉制, 竽、笙(簫)[肅]和, 筦、籥發猛, 塤、篪翁博, 瑟易良, 琴婦好, 歌清盡, 舞意天道兼。[34]

The cosmic dimension of musical instruments makes every performance an eternal testament and tableau of the orderly working of the world under the guidance of the superior man, the sage ruler, who acts like the drum, being the measure-and-rhythm giving conductor of the "cosmic orchestra" which follows along the course he steers:

> The drum: is *it* not the lord of music? Thus, then the drum resembles heaven; the bell resembles earth; the chime stone resembles water; the large and small mouth organ, the *guan* flute and *yue* flute resemble the stars, comets, sun, and moon; the pellet drum and *zhu* instrument, the leathern chaff drum and *ge* sounding box, the *qiang* tambourine and *qia* sounding box resemble the ten thousand kinds of things.
> 鼓, 其樂之君邪。故鼓似天, 鐘似地, 磬似水, 竽、笙、筦、籥似星辰日月, 鞀、柷、拊、鞷、椌、楬似萬物。[35]

Thus, true music and its performance, as understood by Xunzi and other Confucian thinkers, are symbols of social and political theory and action. Musical performance reflects the workings of the cosmos and thus the Dao. The example of the body politic metaphorically signified through the cosmic ballet as the highest elaboration of music alerts us to the fact that the ultimate "meaning and significance" or "idea" (*yi* 意) of the corporal, moral-emotional artifice came to conflate with the Dao.[36] It is by focusing on the micropolitics of music and in particular on the empathic dimensions of intercorporeality surrounding virtuosity that the aesthetic, the political, and the affective are interwoven with the ways in which knowledge associated with society and the state is acquired, transferred, and negotiated. Music, properly devised and controlled by the sage, both *represents* and *expresses* the order of the whole and its parts. Its operation and function may be summarized in five major points:

1. Music is sufficient to "lead along the single Dao" (*shuai yi dao* 率一道).[37]
2. Music creates "great uniformity" (*da qi* 大齊) and is the "guiding line of equilibrium and harmony" (*zhonghe zhi ji* 中和之紀).[38]
3. In music and ritual the Dao of the former kings (*xianwang zhi dao* 先王之道), synonymous with the sages rulers, finds its highest crystallization.[39]

4. Music "improves the people's hearts (minds)" (*shan minxin* 善民心). It "moves their airs and changes their customs" (*yifeng yisu* 移風易俗).[40]
5. Music is controlled by the former kings and translates their frame of mind as an extramusical model into musical "language."[41]

In *SWALL*, these propositions are generally accepted, with one important restriction: music is preeminently nonrepresentative. It takes *ziran* as its essence and pure tonal and dynamic structures without scene, object, or fact. Its being "good" (*shan* 善) or "bad" (*bu shan* 不善) rests with that.[42]

Harmony: Music and Universal Order

Through the integration in a tight-knit network of correlations and significations, intrinsic morphological features of music were projected, by analogy, onto the sociopolitical and moral-emotional realms. Specifically, Xi Kang draws heavily on "harmony" (*he* 和) as a central descriptive and explanatory concept in delineating key aspects of his thinking. Harmony was a major concern in Warring States thought, politically, morally, and aesthetically. In the Confucian tradition, harmony is recognized as unity in variety and social hierarchy.[43] The idea reaches full expression in the dyadic concept of "ritual and music" (*li yue* 禮樂).[44] Ritual is the "order of heaven and earth" (天地之序) and the "differentiation" (*bie* 別) of the myriad things, whereas music is "ultimate harmony" (*jihe* 極和)[45] and has "transformative" (*hua* 化) power.[46] While ritual "separates" (*yi* 異), music "unites" (*tong* 同).[47]

In Xi Kang, harmony comes as a noun, verb, adjective, and is found in collocations.[48] Most conspicuous is the term *harmonious sound* (*hesheng* 和聲).[49] The compound occurs possibly first in the *Zuo zhuan* 左傳 and *Guoyu* 國語. In both cases a Zhou king is instructed to promote music that fits the standard measures and is "harmonious," properly balancing small and large notes: "Therefore, the harmonious sound enters the ear and is stored in the heart (mind); when the heart (mind) becomes aware of it, then there is joy" (故和聲入於耳，而藏於心，心億則樂).[50] Apart from a proportionate balancing of diverse parameters, and implying a numerical regularity which lies at the basis of such proportionate balancing, in this passage harmony is seen to have a significant positive effect on the mind and body, and a decidedly political flavor, projecting music on the king's personal body and the body politic.

Xi Kang's harmonious sound, however, is a higher-order concept, as we shall see shortly in connection with the problem of the one and the many. At this point, suffice it to say that by introducing the notion of the harmonious sound, Xi Kang reinvokes the paronomasia of *shēng* 聲 *syeng* < *hleŋ and *shèng* 聖 *syengH* < *hleŋ-s—"sound" and "sage," the one with acute hearing. The connection between sagacity and sound is etymological, and was well established by the third century.[51] The *Baihutong* 白虎通 (Discussions in the White Tiger Hall) states:

> To be a sage is to communicate, [to embody] the Dao, [to embody] sound. There is nothing with which [the sage's] Dao does not communicate; there is nothing on which [his] illumination does not shine; listening to the sound, [he] knows the genuine condition (disposition, attitude, feeling) [of all entities]. . . .
> 聖者, 通也, 道也, 聲也。道無所不通, 明無所不照。聞聲知情 …。[52]

Xi Kang's *SWALL* is set in this context. But his interest extends far beyond the correspondence between the cosmic and the human, the hallmark of Han philosophy, to fundamental questions of language, mind, and the mystery of Dao. Underlying Xi Kang's essay, as I will argue also, is a veiled criticism of the political domination of the Sima 司馬 clan that eventually led to the demise of the Wei dynasty.

Language and the Autonomous Mind

The true "meaning" (*yi* 義) of the classics concerning the relationship between music, emotions, and the state, according to Xi Kang, "has long been occluded" due to the confusion of "name and reality (i.e., its filling and fulfillment)" (*mingshi* 名實).[53] In *SWALL*, the arguments launched by the "Guest from Qin" are shown to be wholly misleading. When signifiers and the signified do not properly relate to each other, Xi Kang observes, they disfigure the reality of things and their processual nature. Advocating "rectification of names and designations" (*zheng minghao* 正名號) for logical argumentation,[54] which observes the laws of identity, contradiction, and the excluded middle as well as the proper application of the rules of inference,[55] Xi Kang stresses that language reflects the pragmatics of political discourse. Proper argumentation, furthermore, is critical to understanding the major philosophical questions related to epistemology and philosophy of mind. What do we know about other minds when listening to people's words? Can we be sure that people faithfully state what they think? Or do they deceive us

with disguises and cunning craftiness? How can we know the language and mind of the foreign barbarian?[56] What do we know about animal awareness and animal language?[57] Xi Kang's fundamental language skepticism invokes an old theme of Warring States discourse on perception and rhetoric—illusion and lie—that bears directly on ethics and aesthetics.[58] As remedy, he recommends the inquiry into reality through the "Dao (truth) of that-by-which-things-are-of-themselves-what-they-are" (自然之道).[59] Only when the inherent "ordering principle" (*li* 理) is sufficiently known are we justified to draw inference from past and present observations.

However, language can only serve as a medium that seeks to reproduce partially the sublime truth of the Dao. Xi Kang's understanding of *li* as a pattern and differentiation of the particular and at the same time as a universal "ordering principle" reflects a dual concern in affirming the transcendent reality of Dao and the primacy of reason.[60] Thus, Xi Kang stresses the application of the reasoning mind in the inquiry into the "subtle" (*wei* 微) and "profound" (*miao* 妙) "ultimate things" (*zhiwu* 至物) and their "ultimate principle" (*zhili* 至理).[61] In itself unfathomable and indescribable, this transcendent reality may be understood either by embodied intuition or careful study of the structure of objects.[62]

Pre-Qin and Han discourses on the mind, self, and body were inspired by questions of empirical psychology, namely, how people think, feel, and behave. How could people be influenced so as to readjust or change their thinking, feeling, and behavior? Can "privileged access"—that is to say, the unique relationship to the contents of my own mind and mental experience, a form of access that no one else can have—be extended to others? The "problem of other minds" raises important questions.[63] What do we base our knowledge of other people on? How can we claim knowledge of what others think and feel? This is also a political problem. Personal assessment and recruitment in the civil and military services demand knowledge of the "other." Judging men's morals and mental frame by examining the pitchpipes or books such as Liu Shao's 劉邵 (fl. early third century) *Renwu zhi* 人物志 (An Account of Human Abilities), which investigates personality traits and explores aspects of cognitive, emotional, and moral capacities,[64] are telling evidence of the political interest in the matter in early medieval China. Extending the discussion on "capacity" (*cai* 才) and "nature" (*xing* 性) that captivated the imagination of the elite at that time,[65] Xi Kang's view of the emotions is exceptionally sensitive. He locates the essence of both emotion and thought within the boundaries of the

person and regards them as *property* of the individual, notwithstanding interpersonal, social, and historical influences. This is important, for it rules out spontaneous transfer of mental contents, which was assumed by the majority of thinkers before him. Following from this, Xi Kang can point out that physiognomy, prognostication of human ability through watching the ethers, listening to a person's voice and observing his or her facial expression and motor-movement are not sufficient to infer states of minds.[66] As to facial expression or physiological reaction, Xi Kang astutely observes that they are different in each individual, and that the same expression or reaction may have different causes.[67] Thus, the mind is not assessable from outside: "The outer and the inner are different functions; the other and I are different names [i.e., entities]" (外內殊用，彼我異名).[68] Further, Xi Kang writes:

> The relationship of music to mind is like that of body to mind. There are those whose [physical] features are the same but whose feelings (dispositions, attitudes) differ, and there are those who differ in appearance but who are the same in mind. How can I make this clear? Sages are equal in mind and of same virtue, but their [physical] features are different. If the mind is the same but the appearance differs, then how can you speak of observing the body and knowing the mind?
> 夫聲之於(音)[心], 猶形之於心也。有形同而情乖, 貌殊而心均者。何以明之？聖人齊心等德, 而形狀不同也。苟心同而形異, 則何言乎觀形而知心哉。[69]

This ultimately suggests that although we can fairly know our own minds, we can hardly know that others are conscious of what they think/feel and engage in conscious behavior or know what their experiences are.

In agreement with most pre-Qin masters, Xi Kang assumes that desires and emotions tend to go astray and to the extreme.[70] Resorting to the metaphor of the body as a state, Xi Kang warned of the detrimental effects of strong emotions in the absence of well-defined constraints:

> The relation of essence-and-spirit to body and form is like that of the state to having a ruler. When the spirit is agitated inside, the body wastes away outside, just as when the ruler is benighted above, the state is disorderly below.
> 精神之於形骸, 猶國之有君也。神躁於中, 而形喪於外, 猶君昏於上, 國亂於下也。[71]

Like other thinkers of his time, Xi Kang believes that the sages, through their supreme intelligence and based on coherent belief structures and values, would fix the right measure for each desire and emotion in accord with its "function" (*yong* 用).[72] Xi Kang's call for restrictions, or feeling rules, is explained by the fact that whatever desire or emotion aroused by external objects is prone to affect the "equilibrium and harmony" (*zhonghe* 中和) of men, a remote echo of the "Zhongyong" 中庸 (Equilibrium and Mean).[73]

Coming to the idea of music as a language of the emotions, Xi Kang contends that emotion is not the "dominant factor" (*zhu* 主) in music and that emotion and music entertain "no constant" (*wuchang* 無常) relationship.[74] Due to their intrinsic distinctiveness, both categories must be kept apart. To illustrate his point, he shows the influence of the social and geographical environment on shaping habits of hearing and emotional expression.[75] Being matters of cultural practice, people of different cultural background and environment display different emotional responses when exposed to the same music. Given the social and cultural variance, emotional responses to music are unpredictable. Conversely, emotional responses do not allow inference by analogy to the kind of music they are aroused by. Music cannot impart emotion to the listener; rather, the listener's emotional responses to music are caused by an extramusical source. Music "has no image" (*wuxiang* 無象). It cannot represent either the composer's or the player's mind, nor has it the representational capacity of painting to depict mental content. Neither the virtue of a Shun 舜, nor the mind of a zither player such as Bo Ya 伯牙, or the grievance of a Bian He 卞和 can be communicated by sound.[76] All talk about representation, imagination, and memory as mediating processes in mapping the domains of music and emotion on each other is nonsensical. Yet, Xi Kang does not claim that music has no influence on the human mind or human behavior. Rather, he acknowledges that rhythm and tempo can indeed alter psychomotor activities and physical gestures.[77] They differ with the kind of instrument used to produce a certain sound and with the melody of a certain piece, but however different they may be, "the response of [human] emotions to sound is . . . limited to either agitation (*zao* 躁) or stillness (*jing* 靜)"[78] and does not extend to the arousal of discrete emotions. In other words, only the strength or activity level of each emotion may be said to be influenced by music. By drawing attention to this phenomenon, Xi Kang brings to light the dynamics of music listening, real-time processing of musical materials and structures, and emotional response. Carroll Pratt has argued that visual and particularly auditory processes

intrinsically contain certain "formal" properties that because of their close resemblance to certain subjective characteristics are often confused with other functions and processes of our biophysical and mental apparatus.[79] Susanne Langer proposed that these "formal" properties are patterns of motion and rest, tension and release, agreement and disagreement, fulfillment, excitation, and sudden change.[80]

This raises a further question: How are music and language related, and what about language and the emotions? Xi Kang saw language as "a medium not clearly determined by *ziran*" (非自然一定之物).[81] Artificial and conventional by nature, language is a specific product of the human mind and a distinctive cognitive faculty different from sound. It symbolizes and represents mental images, whereas sounds, according to Xi Kang, do not. The latter are essentially nonrepresentative. In songs, however, the expression of affectivity is possible, mediated by emotive and evocative language that operates on the basis of *as-if* or *in-terms-of* relations.[82] Unfortunately, the language issue is not very well argued, though of enormous interest for poetics and song lyrics. It remains a difficult topic, since there must be an agency that controls language's proper use, which immediately recalls the problem of the abuse of language in political rhetoric.[83]

The One and the Many

In some ways all human cultures have to account for the myriads of objects and phenomena surrounding them that are in constant change. Is there an underlying unity that underlies the world of multiplicity and change? Can the many ultimately be traced to a single object, material, or idea? In early China, the ideal ruler came to stand for the universal and stable "one" in an intrinsically unstable relationship with the "many" of society.[84]

Wang Bi's answer to the problem was that the necessary features of the "one" (*yi* 一) that gives rise to the ten thousand kinds of things must be without any of their features. The elusive unspecificity and "featurelessness" of the one is covered, radically, by the term *wu* 無, "negativity."[85] Neither "nothing" nor "something," negativity falls between nonbeing and being and constitutes a third category. Any strategy that seeks to turn negativity into something positive that can be managed and controlled is inevitably flawed, and any such attempt, ultimately futile.[86] "Without shape and without name" (*wuxing wuming* 無形無名),[87] the name of negativity varies. It is called Dao and by a host of other names, which are but heuristic devices, structural

and conceptual metaphors, pointing to "that-by-which" (*suoyi* 所以) creation and completion are brought.[88] Declining all nominations and eluding every structure constructed to subdue it, negativity implicates an alterity more radical than any binary difference or dialectical other.

A frequently cited aural metaphor for the Dao is the "great tone" (*dayin* 大音), which appears in the *Laozi* 老子 (chapter 41). The distinctive feature of the great tone, as Wang Bi understands it, is that it is "inaudible."[89] This is similar, I suggest, to Xi Kang's concept of the harmonious sound. Let us consider the *Laozi* passage with Wang Bi's commentary first:

> The great tone has an inaudible sound.
>
> [Commentary]: "[That] what I do not hear when listening to it, I call *xi* 'inaudible'" (*Laozi*, 14.1). [The great tone] is a tone one is unable to hear. If there are [audible] sounds, then there is specification. If there is specification, then [the particular tone] *gong* cannot be *shang*. Being specific, it cannot gather into one the multitude of [other tones]. Therefore, whatever has sound is not the great tone.
>
> 大音希聲。
>
> [注:] 「聽之不聞, 名曰希。」不可得聞之音也。有聲則有分。有分則不宮而商矣。分則不能統眾。故有聲者非大音也。[90]

Impossible to perceive by the mind or senses, the great tone, different from ordinary, audible tones (in the ordered structure of a scale or musical piece) is without specific features and, apart from *as-if* relations, defies any description. Concerning the features of the one, Wang Bi, in another instance, says: "Without shape or image, without sound or echo—that is why [the one] is able to leave nothing unpenetrated and nothing unreached" (無狀無象，無聲無響。故能無所不通，無所不往).[91] If Wang Bi's great tone refers to a metaphysical concept, does Xi Kang's harmonious sound do so as well?[92]

For Xi Kang, "sounds and tones" (*shengyin* 聲音) are part of the cosmos (nature), something "objective." They are not tied to human thinking and feeling, but something actual or real that is independent of the observers. Xi Kang's strict division between the "internal" (*nei*) mind and "external" (*wai*) sound—"mind and sound are clearly 'two [separate] things'" (*er wu* 二物), as he puts it[93]—suggests that reality for him consists of two discrete parts. In this dualism, the mental and the physical are different in kind.[94] Drawing on *yinyang wuxing* cosmology, he says of the genesis of the five tones:

> Now, Heaven and Earth joined their potencies, and "the ten thousand kinds of things owing to this were begotten."[95] Cold and heat succeeded one another, and the five phases by this came to completion. They were displayed in the five colors, and issued forth in the five tones.[96]
> 夫天地合德, 萬物(貴)[資]生。寒暑代往, 五行以成。章為五色, 發為五音。[97]

Examples from Xi Kang's other writings suggest that he saw the origins of the cosmos as a transformation (*hua* 化) of "energy" (*qi* 氣). "Great simplicity" (*taisu* 太素), the generating force of "substance" (*zhi* 質), is mentioned in the "Taishi zhen" 太師箴 (Admonitions of the Grand Tutor);[98] in the "Mingdan lun" 明膽論 (Discourse on Insight and Courage), "primal energy" (*yuanqi* 元氣) is said to split into yin and yang.[99] Since the origin of sound lies in the generative forces of heaven and earth, sound is a cosmogenic (matter-)energy and "*has* the harmony of *ziran*" (有自然之和).[100] By implication, sound is nothing artificial or man-made. Therefore, Xi Kang only in a few instances speaks of *yue* 樂, "music," avoiding the ambiguous term fraught with cultural significance and immediate reference to emotion by wordplay. While stressing time and again that harmony is the "essential property" (*ti* 體) of sound, Xi Kang also claims that harmony is the "utmost wish of the human mind" (人心至願) and "what feelings and desires love" (情欲所鍾).[101] The idea of harmony, then, has two aspects: an "objective," universal one, being external, timeless, and spaceless, and a "subjective," partial one, being internal, bound to a "master" (*zhu* 主), and situated in time and space. The notion that sounds are either "good" (*shan*) or "bad" (*bu shan*),[102] and that they have particular dynamics is due to *ziran* and belongs to both universal and partial harmony.[103] Harmony as a holistic concept with universal and partial aspects opens itself to different participating subjects, an important property that qualifies it as a metaphor for the Dao. To push the argument farther, apart from the harmony of *ziran*, what are the essential properties of the harmonious sound? As part of *ziran*, unchanging and eternal, nothing can "alter" (*bian* 變) it, that is to say, change its quality.[104] "Without image," being a neutral, featureless category, it "stimulates" (*gan* 感) human beings most deeply and releases whatever emotion is present in the listener.[105] Harmony shares this feature with the formless and nameless Dao and due to this, structural resemblance becomes its metaphor. The harmonious sound so understood can indeed be aligned with Wang Bi's great tone.

As a wholly nonrepresentative phenomenon,[106] the harmonious sound, like the great tone, has no "specification" or "allotment" (*fen* 分). Specification implies "partiality" (*pian* 偏), a bias, preference, or

inclination that inhibits impartial judgment and sharply contrasts with "impartiality" (*wupian* 無偏). Sounds, Xi Kang contends, cannot be emotionally "one-sided" (*pian* 偏) and "firmly fixed" (*gu* 固), because then the released sounds "would in each case match with their specific [function]" (各當其分), which would render impossible the "simultaneous control of a host of different ordering principles" (兼御羣理) and "simultaneous release of many different emotions" (總發眾情).[107] It seems that the Dao-like vacuity and the absence of language-like images in the holistic world of the harmonious sound make it possible for all things to gather within and to express themselves individually. The harmonious sound coincides with Xi's concept of "great harmony" (*taihe* 太和), taken from the *Zhuangzi* 莊子, which serves as an aural counterpart to Zhuangzi's visual metaphor of the profound mirror.[108] Great harmony, empty, passive, and all-embracing like the valley,[109] presupposes "perfect virtue" (*zhide* 至德)[110] and "perfect joy" (*zhile* 至樂), synonymous with "self-attainment" (*zide* 自得).[111] The experience of great harmony seems to be a solitary, perhaps mystical, experience of "great unity" (*datong* 大同) with the "ordering principles" of the Dao.[112] But there is also an aesthetic and political dimension to this. The harmonious balance of contrasting parameters in matters of aural perception and taste came to appeal to the intrinsic nature of social and governmental processes. The structural image and concept of great harmony acquired a decisive role in the political thought of the *Huainanzi* 淮南子.[113] In "Lanming xun" 覽冥訓 (Peering into the Obscure), the ideal ruler handles the affairs of state in unity with the Dao—alias great harmony—and in resonance with *ziran*.[114] The "music without sound' (無聲之樂), Xi Kang also says, is the "father and mother of the people" (民之父母).[115]

Xi Kang's Vision of the World: Order by Harmony

Together with Ruan Ji, Xi Kang represents the voice of protest in third-century China. Yet very little is known about his protest against the power abuse and usurpation of the Sima clan and its retainers.[116] It has been suggested that only a few of Xi Kang's essays contain subtle criticism, among them the "Guan Cai lun" 管蔡論 (Discourse on Guan and Cai), written in 256 or shortly later, which is about Shuxian 叔鮮, Lord of Guan, and Shudu 叔度, Lord of Cai, sons of King Wen 文 of Zhou, who revolted against the "benevolent" usurpation of their brother, the Duke of Zhou 周公, when he was regent for King Cheng 成, the son of King Wu 武 and their nephew.[117] Another essay of political concern is the "Taishi zhen."[118] Composed sometime after the death of Wei Emperor Ming 明 (r. 226–239), the essay is about the newly enthroned young emperor, or

more precisely his regent or regents who were in control of government. By appealing to the rulers of antiquity and their successful government, Xi Kang in these works, very much in the vein of Xunzi, underlines the necessity of sages to teach the people how to follow the order of *ziran* and to enable them to attain peace and fulfillment. To that end, they initiated a government of simplicity and noninterference.[119]

The leadership of the ancient rulers is similarly praised in the closing section of *SWALL*, which, in fact, shares much with the "Admonitions." The depiction of past splendor in *SWALL*, ironically written in the face of the ugly present, is indeed, as Xi Kang puts it, "like unrolling an embroidered tapestry or displaying colored silk, wherein the brightness and brilliance can clearly be seen" (猶舒錦布綵，而粲炳可觀也).[120] Alluding to the angry political strife of his time, he instructs the "Guest from Qin" that the turning point for change must come after a period of decay:

> Talk about "moving airs and changing customs" must come after having inherited [a condition of] decline and decay.[121] The kings of antiquity, "carrying on the work of heaven in bringing order to things,"[122] necessarily venerated *simple and easy teaching*[123] and ruled by government of *non-interference*.[124]
> 夫言移風易俗者, 必承衰弊之後也。古之王者, 承天理物, 必崇簡易之教, 御無為之治。[125]

In a supportive yet nonintervening role, the enlightened ruler guaranteed stable part-whole relations and utmost independence of individual systems within the complex social system. The idea of "simple and easy teaching," as opposed to oppressive governance and tyranny associated with Qin rule, became crucial in *xuanxue* political discourse. Importantly, the phrase "having inherited [a condition of] decline and decay" (*cheng shuaibi* 承衰弊) occurs in an "Opinion" (*yi* 議) on current affairs and matters of public policy presented by Xiahou Xuan in response to Sima Yi's 司馬懿 (179–251) political inquiry shortly after Cao Fang 曹芳 (232–274) ascended the throne in 239. What is even more striking, Xiahou Xuan shares with Xi Kang the ideal of harmony, or balance, when he advises:

> Now, the delicate taste [lit., beauty] of the "well-balanced great broth" lies in blending the different [flavors]. The benefit of above (the ruler) and below (the subjects) lies in being able to merge with each other. When [both are] following [each other] obediently, then there is peace; this is [just as] small zither and large zither in unison.
> 夫和羹之美, 在於合異。上下之益, 在能相濟。順從乃安, 此琴瑟一聲也。[126]

Taken together, theoretical philosophizing and political debate, it seems, were more closely related than one may assume.

Xi Kang's idealized portrait of government through noninterference includes a vision of autonomy as freedom from constraint in the pursuit of one's own understanding of the good life, unhampered by the vicissitudes of authority, role, and social choice:[127]

> The ruler was still above, his subjects obedient below. Dark transformation in hidden ways penetrated, heaven and man communicated in "Peace" (hexagram 11 of the *Zhouyi*). The barren and withered species were immersed and nourished with life-giving fluids. All within the six directions were bathed and purified by the vast stream, rinsed and cleansed of defiling impurities. All forms of life were secure and at ease, "seeking themselves many blessings."[128] Silently they followed the Dao, cherishing loyalty and "holding dear righteousness," unaware of "that by which things were so."
> 君靜於上, 臣順於下。玄化潛通, 天人交泰。枯槁之類, 浸育靈液。六合之內, 沐浴鴻流, 蕩滌塵垢。群生安逸, 自求多福。默然從道, 懷忠抱義, 而不覺其所以然也。[129]

Xi Kang goes on to describe how great harmony brought about balance in every individual and in nature.[130] "Mind and principle were in accord with each other."[131] "Comprehension vast and brightness great"[132] was reflected in music. Customs and manners were unified and "of the flourishing periods of the great Dao, none was greater than this; of the accomplishments of great peace, none was more illustrious than this" (大道之隆，莫盛於茲。太平之業，莫顯於此).[133] Calling on the idea of "music without sound," the superior kind of music that is inaudible and ineffable, and like the Dao devoid of any affectivity, Xi Kang explains that it was due to the effects of this kind of music that Confucius claimed, "For moving airs and changing customs, nothing is better than music."[134] The capacity to "create" and to "rule" by such music, Xi Kang and other thinkers of his time ascribed to the kings of antiquity. The notion of "great peace" (*taiping* 太平) refers to a state of social and political equilibrium which has been described as one of great tranquility when "the ten thousand kinds of things were at peace and secure, and all transformed in agreement with their superiors."[135] The realization of a society in which great peace prevailed was one of the most pressing concerns of Han government. Increasing deterioration of sociopolitical affairs toward the end of the Later Han fuelled the demand for its resurrection. The values in Xi Kang's visionary society of great

peace sound rather Confucian and, in fact, have a Xunzian ring to them. This may sound surprising at first sight. But a close analysis of Xunzi's ideas of state and society reveals his efforts to humanize a collective state, endangered by the scarcity of resources, in which all subscribe to an ethical system with strong aesthetical appeal. Music and rites therein were used as "soft tools" for education and emotion control. It seems that Xi Kang, possibly via *Huainanzi* and the Han debate on rulership, absorbed those syncretistic teachings of Xunzi that exhibit distinctive Daoist, and even Legalist traits, mixed with allusions to the *Changes*.[136] Xunzi's "Bugou" 不苟 (Nothing Indecorous), for example, evokes the rule of the one who in honorable position "without descending from his rooms and halls" (不下室堂) rules over the many.[137] The "Ai Gong" 哀公 (Duke Ai [of Lu]) chapter expands in Daoist manner on the achievements of the "great sage" (*dasheng* 大聖) whose "awareness and comprehension" (*zhi* 知) extends to the "great Dao" (*dadao* 大道) "by which the ten thousand kinds of things are altered and transformed so as to reach completion" (所以變化，遂成萬物也).[138]

But let us return to Xi Kang. Following Xunzi, he saw the rites (a set of ritual and social precedents and customs) as a humanizing power, through which controlled deportment and well-developed organized training of the human body helped to establish social harmony and order founded on mutual "respect" (*jing* 敬). In tandem with music, rites were neither formalistic nor a mere moral concept to guide the people. Rather, they promoted the shaping of an aesthetic society, fashioned by a necessity to respond to major values of the good life as prescribed by the "ordering principles" of the Dao and inscribed in simplicity without stylish ornament.[139] "Loyalty" (*zhong* 忠), "sincerity" (*xin* 信), important values and affect dispositions in Xunzi as well, regulation of words and speech, rhythm of sounds and tones, proper movement and forms of etiquette through learning and practice would lead to gradual transformation and perfection of society, controlled by the "perfect man" (*zhiren* 至人), to wit, the sage.[140]

Envoi

Remarkable and of considerable importance is the fact that Xi Kang, like the *Huainanzi*, to which he refers in more than one instance, seems to attempt to formulate a political ideal contributing to the development and advancement of Daoist principles at a practical and social level,[141] with a sage ruler in the highest position who reacts appropriately free from affections in whatever environment.[142] That brings us back full

circle to the question of the emotional nature of the sage discussed in the Zhengshi period—for Xi Kang, the "Sage without Emotion" was the one who, with a nature that is inherently unselfish and unbiased, could respond to the many in all contingencies.

Although at first glance *SWALL* looks rather innocent in its political criticism, the identification of source patterns and recognition of target domains in the metaphorical mapping of music to cosmos, nature, the state, and the human body suggests a different view. Xi Kang, like so many others of his contemporaries, used the power of hidden language to voice indirect criticism in dialogue form, continuing the well-developed conversational tradition of the pre-Qin masters. The final section of *SWALL*, where Xi Kang paints a portrait of an ordered world vis-à-vis the deteriorating political situation of his time, and the rhapsodic closing statement are particularly intriguing in this regard. Xi Kang's proposal for autonomy within a world of plurality rooted in the same source, in effect, opposed all centrifugal movements likely to destroy the unity of the state. The significance and logic of genre presents us with a unique opportunity to think critically about its use in particular historical situations, characterized by particular expectations of audiences and readers.

Notes

I wish to thank Alan Chan for congenial suggestions to bring the originally longer version of this article into its final form.

1. See, for example, David B. Wong, "Is There a Distinction between Reason and Emotion in Mencius?" *Philosophy East and West* 41, no. 1 (1991): 31–44; Chad Hansen, "*Qing* (Emotions) 情 in Pre-Buddhist Chinese Thought," in *Emotions in Asian Thought: A Dialogue in Comparative Philosophy*, ed. Joel Marks and Roger T. Ames (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 181–203; Anne Cheng, "Émotions et sagesse dans la Chine ancienne: L'élaboration de la notion de *qing* dans les texts philosophiques des Royaumes combattants jusqu'aux Han," *Études chinoises* 18, no. 1–2 (1999): 31–58; Manyul Im, "Emotional Control and Virtue in the *Mencius*," *Philosophy East and West* 49, no. 1 (1999): 1–27; Michael Nylan, "On the Politics of Pleasure," *Asia Major*, 3rd Series, 14, no. 1 (2001): 73–124; Michael Puett, "The Ethics of Responding Properly: The Notion of *Q'ng* in Early Chinese Thought," in *Love and Emotions in Traditional Chinese Literature*, ed. Halvor Eifring (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 37–68; and my "Emotion Management: Social Psychology and Social Techniques in Early China," *Ming Qing yanjiu* (Naples) 2003–4: 161–251.

2. For a survey of He Yan's, Wang Bi's, and Zhong Hui's positions in the emotion debate, see Wang Baoxuan 王葆玹, *Zhengshi xuanxue* 正始玄學 (Ji'nan: Qi-Lu, 1987), 372–89. See further Chang Chung-yue, "Wang Pi on the Mind," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 9 (1982): 79–85; Alan K. L. Chan, *Two Visions of the Way: A Study of the Wang Pi and the Ho-shang Kung Commentaries on the Lao Tzu* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 35–37. Also see Chan's study of He Yan in this volume.
3. Or 224–263, as Dai Mingyang 戴明揚 has suggested; see his *Xi Kang ji jiaozhu* 嵇康集校注 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1962), 369.
4. For Ruan Ji's essay, see Chen Bojun 陳伯君 (1895–1969), ed., *Ruan Ji ji jiaozhu* 阮籍集校注 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1987), 77–100; Donald Holzman, *Poetry and Politics: The Life and Work of Juan Chi A.D. 210–263* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 88–89. Mou Zongsan 牟宗三 underlines the significance of Ruan Ji's notion of *he* 和, "harmony," in his *Caixing yu xuanli* 才性與玄理 (Taipei: Xuesheng, 1985), 309, 315. For important comments on Ruan Ji's synthesis of traditional values in music and the notion of *ziran* 自然, see Cai Zhongde 蔡仲德, *Zhongguo yinyue meixueshi* 中國音樂美學史 (Beijing: Renmin yinyue, 1995), 466–76, 479–88; also relevant is Ronald Egan, "The Controversy over Music and 'Sadness' and Changing Conceptions of the *Qin* in Middle Period China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 57, no. 1 (1997): 5–6, 14, 15. For the fragments of Xiahou Xuan's "Bian 'Yue lun,'" see Li Fang 李昉 (925–996) et al., comp., *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 (reprint, Beijing: Zhonghua, 1960), 16.7a-b, and *Quan Sanguo wen* 全三國文, 21.7a-b, in Yan Kejun 嚴可均 (1762–1843), ed., *Quan shanggu sandai Qin Han Sanguo Liuchao wen* 全上古三代秦漢三國六朝文 (reprint [5 vols.], 5th ed., Beijing: Zhonghua, 1991) (hereafter only the specific part of Yan's work is cited, e.g., *Quan Han wen*, *Quan Hou Han wen*, etc.). The scarce textual evidence suggests that Xiahou Xuan took issue with Ruan Ji's ostensible traditionalism. He seems to argue along the lines of Xi Kang. Holzman includes a translation and brief comment; see his *Poetry and Politics*, 92.
5. The meaning and translation of *wu* 無, "negativity," "nothingness," as conceptually prior, opposed and yet complementary to *you* 有, has provoked considerable discussion. The pair has been rendered as "absence" (of material form and specification) and "presence" (of material form and specification), "(there-)non-being" and "(there-)being," and "nothing" and "something." It must not be confused with the metaphysical terms of nonbeing and being; see Angus C. Graham, "'Being' in Western Philosophy Compared with *Shih/fei* and *Yu/wu* in Chinese Philosophy," *Asia Major*, New Series, 7, no. 1–2 (1959): 98–104; Chad Hansen. *Language and Logic in Ancient China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1983), 43–44; Chan, *Two Visions of the Way*, 45–47;

and his more recent essay "Zhong Hui's *Laozi* Commentary and the Debate on Capacity and Nature in Third-Century China," *Early China* 28 (2003): 129–31; see also Rudolf G. Wagner, *Language, Ontology, and Political Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), esp. 88–98. Following Christoph Harbsmeier, Wagner translates *wu* 物 in *wanwu* 萬物 as "kinds of entities," see *Language, Ontology, and Political Philosophy*, 233, n. 54; cf. Harbsmeier's *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 7, no. 1, *Language and Logic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 218–29, 318–19. Also see Jude Chua's essay on Wang Bi in this volume.

6. For Tang's definition, see "Wei Jin xuanxue lun gao" 魏晉玄學論稿, in *Tang Yongtong xueshu lunwenji* 湯用彤學術論文集 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1983), 233–37; Wagner, *Language, Ontology, and Political Philosophy*, 83–88. See further Tang's "Yan yi zhi bian" 言意之辨, in *Tang Yongtong xueshu lunwenji*, 215–17; cf. Robert G. Henricks's criticism in his "Hsi K'ang: His Life, Literature, and Thought" (PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1976), 30, n. 38. For the notion of "independent transformation" (*duhua* 獨化), see Tang Yongtong, "Chong you zhi xue yu Xiang Guo xueshuo" 崇有之學與向郭學說, in his *Lixue, foxue, xuanxue* 理學 · 佛學 · 玄學, ed. Zhang Wending 張文定 (Beijing: Beijing daxue, 1991), 342–43; Un Chol Shin, "Kuo Hsiang, A Rational Taoist" (Ph.D dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1976), 39–42, 71; and Brook Ziporyn's study in this volume.

7. Of the numerous studies on the concept of *ziran*, variously translated as "nature," "naturalness," "spontaneity," "the self-so," "self-right," "that-which-is-of-itself-what-it-is," and "Selbst-Erweisung," see Shin, "Kuo Hsiang," 46–72; Richard Lee van Houton, "The Concept of Nature (*Tzu Jan*) in Kuo Hsiang and Its Antecedent" (PhD dissertation, University of British Columbia, 1981); Aat Vervoorn, "Zhuang Zun: A Daoist Philosopher of the Last First Century B.C.," *Monumenta Serica* 38 (1988–89): 81–94; Murotani Kuniyuki 室谷邦行, "Shizen gainen no seiritsu ni tusite" 自然概念の成立について, *Nihon Ch goku gakkai h*ō 日本中國學會報 40 (1988): 16–31; William A. Callahan, "Discourse and Perspective in Daoism: A Linguistic Interpretation of *ziran*," *Philosophy East and West* 39, no. 2 (1989): 171–89; Chan, *Two Visions of the Way*, 61–63; Brook Ziporyn, "The Self-so and Its Traces in the Thought of Guo Xiang," *Philosophy East and West* 43, no. 3 (1993): 511–39. For a critical survey of the above works and other important studies on *ziran* in pre-Qin, Han, and early Wei thought, see Hermann-Josef Röllicke, *"Selbst-Erweisung": Der Ursprung des ziran-Gedankens in der chinesischen Philosophie des 4. und 3. Jhs. v. Chr.* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1996), 20–61.

8. For example, see Kong Fan 孔繁, *Wei Jin xuantan* 魏晉玄談 (Shenyang: Liaoning jiaoyu, 1991), 90–107.

9. See Liu Xie's 劉勰 (ca. 465–532) *Wenxin diaolong*, "Lun shuo" 論說, in Zhan Yang (or Ying) 詹鍈, ed., *Wenxin diaolong yizheng* 文心雕龍義證 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1978), 18/4.679; Vincent Yu-chung Shih, trans., *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons: A Study of Thought and Pattern in Chinese Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), 102. For comments, see Henricks, "Hsi K'ang," 218–22; and his "Hsi K'ang and Argumentation in the Wei," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 8, no. 2 (1981), esp. 170–73; Chan, *Two Visions of the Way*, 22–24. See further Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403–444), comp., with commentary by Liu Jun 劉峻 (462–521), *Shishuo xinyu*, "Wenxue" 文學, in Yu Jiaxi 余嘉錫 (1883–1955), ed., *Shishuo xinyu jianshu* 世說新語箋疏 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1993), 4.21; Richard Mather, trans., *Shih-shuo Hsin-yü: A New Account of the Tales of the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), 102–103; Yu Yingshi 余英時, "Wang Sengqian 'Jie zi shu' yu Nanchao qingtan kaobian" 王僧虔《誡子書》與南朝清談考辨, *Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiu jikan* 中國文哲研究集刊 3 (1993): 173, 186–87; Mou Zongsan, *Caixing yu xuanli*, 316–17; Dai Lianzhang 戴璉璋, *Xuanzhi xuanli yu wenhua fazhan* 玄智, 玄理與文化發展 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan Zhongguo wen zhe yanjiusuo, 2002), 122–34.
10. In terms of genre, Xi Kang's "Discourse" (*lun* 論), in German "*Erörterung*," which also can be translated as "Treatise" or "Discussion," stands in the tradition of "Response to a Guest's Objections" (*da kenan* 答客難). It has much in common as well with the "Hypothetical Discourse" (*shelun* 設論). Zeng Chunhai 曾春海 moves it into the genre of "Sevens" (*qi* 七); see his *Xi Kang: Zhulin qixian de dianfan* 嵇康: 竹林七賢的典範 (Taipei: Furen daxue, 1994), 160.
11. Donald Holzman, *La vie et la pensée de Hi K'ang (223–262 AP. J.-C.)* (Leiden: Brill, 1957), 68–69.
12. See Zhang Shibin 張世彬, "Xi Kang: Yinyue duli de weida gongchen" 嵇康: 音樂獨立的偉大功臣, *Mingbao yuekan* 明報月刊 1973.7: 22–23; Mou Zongsan, *Caixing yu xuanli*, 345; Robert G. Henricks, trans., *Philosophy and Argumentation in Third-Century China: The Essays of Hsi K'ang* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 71; Zeng Chunhai, *Xi Kang*, 83, 181.
13. See Ma Qinzhong 馬欽忠, "Lun Xi Kang 'Sheng wu aile lun' de meixue sixiang" 論嵇康《聲無哀樂論》的美學思想, *Zhongguo yinyuexue* 中國音樂學 1996.3: 80–81; Egan, "The Controversy over Music and 'Sadness,'" 25–30.
14. For details of this argument, see Wang Baoxuan, *Zhengshi xuanxue*, 337–43; cf. Wagner, *Language, Ontology, and Political Philosophy*, 49.
15. Recognized by Henricks, "Hsi K'ang," 221, n. 8; and in his *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 72. The Old Chinese reconstructions are based on William H. Baxter's *A Handbook of Old Chinese Phonology* (Berlin:

de Gruyter, 1992) and his "Old Chinese, Version 1.1 (Beta Test Version)," paper presented at the 28th International Conference on Sino-Tibetan Languages and Linguistics, Charlottesville, Virginia, 1995, with modifications proposed by Laurent Sagart in *The Roots of Old Chinese* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1999). The notation of the Pulleyblankian A/B syllable types follows Wolfgang Behr, "Coding Coherence: Some (Mor)phonological Text Structuring Devices in Pre-Qin Prose," *Bochumer Jahrbuch zur Ostasienforschung* 29 (2005): 20, n. 12.

16. Cf. Nathan Sivin, "State, Cosmos, and Body in the Last Three Centuries B.C.," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 55, no. 1 (1995): 5, n. 1.
17. For evidence of a strong moral stance in Xi Kang, see Fukunaga Mitsuji 福永光司, "Kei Kō ni okeru jiga no mondai: Kei Kō no seikatsu to shisō" 嵇康における自我の問題: 嵇康の生活と思想, *Tōhō gakuhō* 東方學報 32 (1962): 29–32; Tang Changru 唐長孺, "Wei Jin xuanxue zhi xingcheng ji qi fazhan" 魏晉玄學之形成及其發展, in *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi luncong* 魏晉南北朝史論叢, 4th ed. (Beijing: Sanlian, 1978), 328–29; Henricks, "Hsi K'ang," 317–28.
18. This argument has been made for Zhuangzi by Scott B. Cook in his "Zhuang Zi and his Carving of the Confucian Ox," *Philosophy East and West* 47, no. 4 (1997): 521–53.
19. There is no single equivalent in the English language that would aptly express the range of meanings covered by each of these terms. Among them, "sound" (*sheng* 聲) refers very broadly to all audible sounds, from those of the natural environment to animal cries and human voices. When these sounds are combined in a meaningful manner and built a musical structure (or "pattern," *wen* 文), they are called "tone," or "note" (*yin* 音). "Tone" then refers not only to the ordered sounds of a piece of music, and in extension to "music," but also to each single musical note in a scale. Used for both the scalar and orchestrational aspects, "tone" also denotes timbre (for example, "eight timbres" *bayin* 八音). However, the clear-cut distinction between *sheng* and *yin* breaks down when one comes to compounds such as *wuyin* 五音 and *wusheng* 五聲, which both refer to the "five notes" of the pentatonic scale. For studies, see Tamaki Naoyuki 玉木尚之, "'Gaku' to bunka ishiki: Juka gakuron no seiritsu o megutte" 「樂」と文化意識: 儒家樂論の成立をめぐって, *Nihon Chūgoku gakkai hō* 38 (1986): 47–60; Cai Zhongde, *Zhongguo yinyue meixueshi*, 138–39; Scott B. Cook, "Unity and Diversity in the Musical Thought of Warring States China" (PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 1995), 48–61; and his "*Yue Ji* 樂記—Record of Music," *Asian Music* 26, no. 2 (1995): 18–24; Wang Xiaodun 王小盾, "Zhongguo yinyueshi shang de yue yin sheng sanfen" 中國音樂史上的樂音聲三分, *Zhongguo xueshu* 中國學術 3 (2001): 55–73.
20. Early sources depict animals as having outwardly observable inner affections, as being intentional agents, and as being contiguous with the

human race with whom they share the common substrate *qi* 氣, "life force" (*sheng* 生), and "awareness" (*zhi* 知); see Donald J. Harper, *Early Chinese Medical Literature: The Mawangdui Medical Manuscripts* (London: Kegan Paul, 1998), 79–84; Roel Sterckx, *The Animal and the Daemon in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 73–78; Paul U. Unschuld, *Huang Di nei jing su wen: Nature, Knowledge, Imagery in an Ancient Chinese Medical Text* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 144–50, 166–67, 174–77 passim; and my "Inside the Minds of Animals: Towards a Theory of Consciousness and Feeling in Early China," in *A Passion for China: Essays in Honour of Paolo Santangelo for his 60th Birthday*, ed. Chiu Ling-yeong, with Donatella Guida (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 237–50.

21. The locus classicus is found in the "Yue ji" 樂記, in *Liji zhushu* 禮記注疏, commentary by Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200), subcommentary by Kong Yingda孔穎達 (574–648), in Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764–1849), ed., *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏 (hereafter *SSJZS*) (reprint, Beijing: Zhonghua, 1980), 19/37.1527a; James Legge, trans., *Li chi: Book of Rites* (1885; reprint [2 vols.], New York: University Books, 1967), 2:92. The text of the "Yue ji" appears in a slightly different order and with variant readings in the "Yue shu" 樂書 (Book on Music) of Sima Qian's 司馬遷 (ca. 145–ca. 86 BC) *Shi ji* 史記 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1959), 24.1179–234. Substantial parallels are found in the *Xunzi* "Li lun" 禮論 (Discourse on Ritual) and "Yue lun" 樂論 (Discourse on Music). In the following, only references to the *Li ji* are given.
22. *Li ji*, "Yue ji," 19/37.1527a-b; 1528b; Legge, *Li chi*, 2:92, 93, 95. On the importance of emotions in early Chinese thought, see for example, *Xunzi*, "Zhengming" 正名, in Wang Xianqian 王先謙 (1842–1918), ed., *Xunzi jijie* 荀子集解, *Zhuzi jicheng* 諸子集成 (hereafter *ZZJC*) (reprint, Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), 22/16.274; *Li ji*, "Li yun" 禮運, 9/22.1422c. For a preliminary survey of the basic emotions in early Chinese sources, see Paolo Santangelo, *Sentimental Education in Chinese History: An Interdisciplinary Textual Research on Ming and Qing Sources* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 217–26; Middendorf, "Emotion Management," 190–200; and my "Basic Emotions in Warring States Texts: Patterns and Sequences," in *Emotions in Chinese Civilization: Questions and Themes*, ed. Paolo Santangelo, with Donatella Guida (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 126–48.
23. For example, Theodore D. Kemper's social interactional theory, developed in his *A Social Interactional Theory of Emotions* (New York: Wiley and Sons, 1978); and Richard S. Lazarus's cognitive-motivational-relational theory, as laid out in his *Emotion and Adaption* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).
24. For an etymological and conceptual survey of *qi* 氣, see, e.g., Manfred Porkert, *The Theoretical Foundations of Chinese Medicine: Systems*

of Correspondence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1974), 62, 166–76; Ulrich Libbrecht, "Prâna = Pneuma = Ch'i?" in *Thought and Law in Qin and Han China*, ed. Wilt L. Idema and Eric Zürcher (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 55–61; Harper, *Early Chinese Medical Literature*, 77–78; Unschuld, *Huang Di nei jing su wen*, 144–46.

25. Cf. Stephen Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 41–43.
26. Cf. *Lüshi chunqiu*; "Chi yue" 侈樂, in Chen Qiyou 陳奇猷 (b. 1917) ed., *Lüshi chunqiu jiaoshi* 呂氏春秋校釋 (new edition, Shanghai: Xuelin, 1984), 5.265; John Knoblock and Jeffrey Riegel, trans., *The Annals of Lü Buwei* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 141. For the ambivalence of "music" and "joy," on which the "Yue lun" plays throughout, see also *Mozi*, "Gong Meng" 公孟, in Wu Yujiang 吳毓江 (1898–1977), ed., *Mozi jiaozhu* 墨子校注 (Chengdu: Xi'nan shifan daxue, n.d), 48/12.593; *Mengzi* 1B.1, in Jiao Xun 焦循 (1763–1820), ed., *Mengzi zhengyi* 孟子正義, *Xinbian zhuzi jicheng* 新編諸子集成 (hereafter *XBZZJC*) (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1996), 4.99–106.
27. *Elegantiae* and *Hymns*, or *ya* 雅 and *song* 頌, are the two major sections of the *Shijing* 詩經, or *Classic of Poetry/Odes*.
28. *Qi* here refers to "emotional energy," as usually found in early Chinese medical texts and also in Daoist literature on psychological techniques and self-cultivation. See, for example, Harold D. Roth, "Psychology and Self-Cultivation in Early Taoistic Thought," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 51, no. 2 (1991): 611–50; and his *Original Tao: Inward Training (Nei-yeh) and the Foundation of Taoist Mysticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).
29. *Xunzi*, "Yue lun," 20/14.252; cf. John Knoblock, trans. *Xunzi: A Translation and Study of the Complete Works*, 3 vols. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988–94), 3:80. See also *Li ji*, "Yue ji," 19/39.1544b-c; Legge, *Li chi*, 2:127. The translations of the musical terms, referring to melodic form, pitch register, richness of sound, and tempo, follow Zheng Xuan's explanations and the additional notes of Kong Yingda in *Li ji*, "Yue ji," 19/39.1544c–45a. Cf. "Zhouyu" 周語, in *Guoyu* 國語, commentary by Wei Zhao 韋昭 (ca. 200–273) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1978), 3.128.
30. For discussions of this claim, see Karl Wulff, "'Musik' und 'Freude' im Chinesischen," *Det Kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskab. Historisk-filologiske Meddelelser* 21, no. 2 (1935): 1–39; Mizukami Shizuo 水上靜夫, "Gaku ji kō" 「樂」字考, *Nihon Chūgoku gakkai hō* 日本中國學會報 18 (1966): 23–37; Kenneth J. DeWoskin, *A Song for One or Two: Music and the Concept of Art in Early China* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1982), 58–59; and my "Emotion Management," 215–17.
31. Mizukami Shizuo, "Gaku ji kō," 28; and my "Emotion Management," 216.

32. Angus Graham noted that the verb *wei* 為 is used to indicate temporary roles. It functions as an active verb, "to act as . . . ," "to be;" see his "'Being' in Western Philosophy Compared with *Shih/fei* and *Yu/wu* in Chinese Philosophy," 83. Here *wei* links those domains involved in the metaphorical mapping to one another.
33. *Li ji*, "Yue ji," 19/37.1528a; cf. Legge, *Li chi*, 2:94; for a discussion, see my "Thematische Progression: Verkettung, Konnexität und Hierarchien musikalischer, emotionspsychologischer und staatsphilosophischer Konzepte im 'Yuèjì' 樂記 (Aufzeichnungen über die Musik)," *Bochumer Jahrbuch zur Ostasienforschung* 29 (2005): 107–109.
34. *Xunzi*, "Yue lun," 20/14.255; cf. Knoblock, *Xunzi*, 3:85.
35. Ibid.
36. *Xunzi*, "Yue lun," 20/14.255–56; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, 3:85.
37. *Xunzi*, "Yue lun," 20/14.252; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, 3:81.
38. *Xunzi*, "Yue lun," 20/14.253; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, 3:81; cf. *Li ji* 19/39.1545a; Legge, *Li chi*, 2:128.
39. *Xunzi*, "Yue lun," 20/14.253; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, 3:81.
40. "Guang yao dao" 廣要道, in *Xiaojing zhushu* 孝經注疏, commentary by Xing Bing 邢昺 (931–1010), *SSJZS*, 12/6.2556b; Mary L. Makra, trans., *The Hsiao ching*, ed. Paul K.T. Sih (New York: St. John's University Press, 1961), 27. The issue is thematic in *SWALL*, 5.220–23, 225; Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 101–104.
41. *Xunzi*, "Yue lun," 20/14.253–54; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, 3:82–83.
42. SWALL, 5.197; Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 73.
43. See, for instance, *Li ji*, "Yue ji," 19/37.1535a, 1535c; Legge, *Li chi*, 2:109, 110. For excellent discussions, see Li Zehou 李澤厚 and Liu Gangji 劉綱紀, *Zhongguo meixueshi* 中國美學史 (Beijing: Shehui kexue, 1990), 1:86–101; Cook, "Unity and Diversity," 66–87; and his "Xun Zi on Ritual and Music," *Monumenta Serica* 45 (1997): 31, 36–38. See, too, Feng Youlan 馮友蘭, *Zhongguo zhexueshi* 中國哲學史 (Shanghai: Shangwu, 1934), 59; Cai Zhongde, *Zhongguo yinyue meixueshi*, 12–13, 36–38. For "harmony" as a central notion in poetry, painting, and calligraphy, see DeWoskin, *A Song for One or Two*, 9, 158–60, 177–79; and his "Early Chinese Music and the Origins of Aesthetic Terminology," in *Theories of the Arts in China*, ed. Susan Bush and Christian Murck (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 200. See also Haun Saussy, "Repetition, Rhyme, and Exchange in the *Book of Odes*," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 57, no. 2 (1997): 522.
44. On binary concepts and the dualism/polarism issue in early Chinese thought, see Benjamin Schwartz, "Some Polarities in Confucian Thought," in *Confucianism in Action*, ed. David S. Nivison and Arthur F. Wright (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959), 51–52; Roger T. Ames, "The Meaning of Body in Classical Chinese Thought," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 24 (1984): 40–45; David N. Keightley, "Shang Divination and Metaphysics," *Philosophy East and West* 38, no. 4

(1988): 367–97, esp. 373–78; and his *The Ancestral Landscape: Time, Space, and Community in Late Shang China (ca. 1200–1045 B.C.)* (Berkeley: University of California; Center for Chinese Studies, 2000), 91–93; see further my "Thematische Progression," 90–91; and also Rudolf G. Wagner, *The Craft of a Chinese Commentator: Wang Bi on the Laozi* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), chap. 3, and *Language, Ontology, and Political Philosophy*, 62–68, 98–101.

45. *Li ji*, "Yue ji," 19/39.1544a; Legge, *Li chi*, 2:126; for a parallel, see *Li ji*, "Jiyi" 祭義, 24/48.1598b; Legge, *Li chi*, 2:225.
46. *Li ji*, "Yue ji," 19/37.1530b; Legge, *Li chi*, 2:100–101.
47. *Li ji*, "Yue ji," 19/37.1529b; Legge, *Li chi*, 2:98.
48. For an overview, see Matsuura Takashi 松浦崇, ed., *Keikōshū bunshū sakuin* 嵇康集文章索引 (Fukuoka: Chūgoku shōten, 1981), 145. A brief study on Xi Kang's notion of "harmony" is found in Zheng Zhenghao 鄭正浩, "Kei Kō no ongaku shisō ni okeru 'wa' ni tsuite" 嵇康の音樂思想における「和」について, *Nihon Chūgoku gakkai hō* 日本中國學會報 28 (1976): 79–91.
49. *SWALL*, 5.199 (four times), 204 (two times), 219, 224, 225. For a review of the notion of the harmonious sound in the context of *xuanxue*, see Dai Lianzhang, "Xuanxue zhong de yinyue sixiang," 82–84; and his *Xuanzhi xuanli yu wenhua fazhan*, 141–48.
50. *Zuo zhuan*, Zhao 21 (521 BCE), in *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhushu* 春秋左傳注疏, commentary by Du Yu 杜預 (222–284), subcommentary by Kong Yingda, *SSJZS*, 50.2097a-b; James Legge, trans. *The Chinese Classics*, vol. 5, *The Ch'un Ts'ew with The Tso Chuen* (1872; reprint, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960), 5:687–88. I read *yi* 憶, "to remember," "to reflect upon" > "to be consciously aware of," for *yi* 億, "to feel at ease," as suggested by Du Yu. For the passage, cf. *Guoyu*, 3.125; James P. Hart, "The Philosophy of the *Chou Yü*" (PhD dissertation, University of Washington, 1973), 389.
51. The *Lüshi chunqiu*, "Chongyan" 重言 (18.1157) says: "Therefore, the sage listens to the soundless, observes the formless. Zhan He, Tian Zifang, and Lao Dan were [all sages] of this [kind]" (故聖人聽於無聲, 視於無形。詹何、田子方、老耽是也); cf. Knoblock and Riegel, *Lü Buwei*, 446.
52. Chen Li 陳立 (1809–1869), ed., *Baihutong shuzheng* 白虎通疏證, *XBZZJC* (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1997), 7.334; cf. Tjan Tjoe Som, trans., *Po hu t'ung: The Comprehensive Discussions in the White Tiger Hall*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1949, 1952), 2:528. Cf. *Da Dai Liji jiegu* 大戴禮記解詁, commentary by Wang Pinzhen 王聘珍 (18th century) (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1983), 40/1.11; *Xunzi*, "Ai gong" 哀公, 31/20.355; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, 3.261. For details on the etymology of the word *sheng* 聖, connotated with the idea of acute hearing or acute aural perception, see DeWoskin, *A Song for One or Two*, 32–34; Hsü Chin-Hsiung and Alfred H. C. Ward, *Ancient Chinese Society: An Epigraphic and*

Archaeological Interpretation (Taipei: Yiwen, 1984), 22–23; Julia Ching, "The Ancient Sages (*sheng*): Their Identity and Their Place in Chinese Intellectual History," *Oriens Extremus* 30 (1983–86): 14–15; Jao Tsung-i [Rao Zongyi], "Speaking of Sages: The Bronze Figures of San-hsing-tui," in *Sages and Filial Sons: Mythology and Archaeology in Ancient China*, ed. Julia Ching and Richard W. L. Guisso (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1991), viii–xvii; William G. Boltz, *The Origin and Early Development of the Chinese Writing System* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1994), 114–16; Behr, "Coding Coherence," 28–30; and my "Emotion Management," 172–74, n. 28, 212–14.

53. *SWALL*, 5.197; Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 73. The dyad of *ming* 名 and *shi* 實 seems to refer to a very basic division of the world, in which *shi* is also used to signify the product of a process and together with *ming* reflect an aural/visual pairing; see Jane Geaney, *On the Epistemology of the Senses in Early Chinese Thought* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), ch. 4. For a different approach that explores the binary concept of *mingshi* through the philosophy of the late Han thinker Xu Gan 徐幹 (170–217), see John Makeham, *Name and Actuality in Early Chinese Thought* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994); and Jude Chua's study in this volume.
54. *SWALL*, 5.197, 204; Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 73, 81.
55. For Xi Kang's logic of argumentation, see the detailed discussions by Hou Wailu 侯外廬, Ji Xuanbing 紀玄冰, Du Shousu 杜守素, and Qiu Hansheng 邱漢生, *Zhongguo sixiang tongshi* 中國思想通史 (Beijing: Renmin, 1957), 3:179–86, Henricks, "Hsi K'ang," 218–60; and his "Hsi K'ang and Argumentation in the Wei"; also see Dai Lianzhang, *Xuanzhi xuanli yu wenhua fazhan*, 122–34.
56. SWALL, 5.210; Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 87.
57. *SWALL*, 5.200, 210; Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 76, 86.
58. For discussions, see Lisa Raphals, *Knowing Words: Wisdom and Cunning in the Classical Traditions of China and Greece* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), esp. 129–31; David N. Keightley, "Epistemology in Cultural Context: Disguise and Deception in Early China and Early Greece," in *Early China / Ancient Greece: Thinking through Comparisons*, ed. Steven Shankman and Stephen W. Durrant (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), esp. 130–40, and 146–47, n. 19.
59. SWALL, 5.204; Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 80.
60. Cf. Wing-tsit Chan, "Evolution of the Neo-Confucian Concept *Li* 理 as Principle," *Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies* 4, no. 2 (1964): 129.
61. Henricks, "Hsi K'ang," 311–14; Dai Lianzhang, *Xuanzhi xuanli yu wenhua fazhan*, 134–41.
62. Xi Kang says: "The ultimate principle is truly subtle, and it is prone to be lost in the world. But one may seek it in oneself and then become conscious of it or examine external things to know it" (夫至理誠微, 善溺于世。然或可求諸身而後悟, 校外物以知之); "Da 'Nan yangsheng lun'"

答難養生論 (Answer to [Xiang Xiu's] Refutation of My "Discourse on Nourishing Life"), in *Xi Kang ji jiaozhu*, 4.282; Henricks, "Hsi K'ang," 316; and his *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 62; translation modified. See further Paul Demiéville, "Langue et literature chinoises," *Annuaire du Collegè de France* 47 (1947): 153; Wing-tsit Chan, "The Evolution of the Neo-Confucian Concept *Li*," 123–32; Henricks, "Hsi K'ang," 314–17; He Qimin 何啓民, *Zhulin qixian yanjiu* 竹林七賢研究 (Taipei: Xuesheng, 1984), 74–86.

63. For some views on the issue as discussed in contemporary Western philosophy, see Paul M. Churchland, *Matter and Consciousness: A Contemporary Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988), 66–72; Fred Dretske, *Naturalizing the Mind* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), 44–51; and Elliott Sober, "Evolution and the Problem of Other Minds," *Journal of Philosophy* 97, no. 7 (2000): 365–86.
64. A method of personality evaluation, categorization, and selection for civil and military office called "technique of knowing [one's] subjects" (知下之術) was proposed by the *Yijing* 易經 and calendar specialist Yi Feng 翼奉 (first century BCE) during the reign of Han Emperor Xuan 宣 (r. 74–49 BCE); see Ban Gu 班固 (32–92), comp., *Han shu* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1962), 75.3167–68. For studies and translations of Liu Shao's *Renwu zhi*, see Tang Yongtong 湯用彤, "Du *Renwu zhi*" 讀《人物志》, in *Tang Yongtong xueshu lunwenji*, 196–213; John K. Shryock, trans., *The Study of Human Abilities: The Jen Wu Chih of Liu Shao* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1937); Anne-Marie Lara, trans., *Traité des caractères* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997); and the studies by Alan Chan and Zong-qi Cai in this and the companion volume. For a summary, including references to the various techniques for knowing others, such as physiognomy and the "psycho-analytical" method of "looking into the inner" (*shizhong* 視中), see my "Emotion Management," 192–200.
65. For an excellent account on the controversial subject that came to dominate fourth and fifth centuries, see Alan K. L. Chan, "What Are the 'Four Roots of Capacity and Nature'?" in *Wisdom in China and the West*, ed. Vincent Shen and Willard G. Oxtoby (Washington, DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2004), 143–84.
66. *SWALL*, 5.205, 207, 210, 211, 213–14; Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 83, 87, 88, 90–91, 92.
67. SWALL, 5.207–8; Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 84.
68. *SWALL*, 5.200; cf. Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 76. The emendation follows the Zhang manuscript, as indicated by Dai Mingyang.
69. *SWALL*, 5.213; cf. Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 91. The emendation follows the suggestion of Dai Mingyang.
70. *SWALL*, 5.197; Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 74; and his "Hsi K'ang," 282–86.
71. "Yangsheng lun" 養生論 (Discourse on Nurturing Life), in *Xi Kang ji*

jiaozhu, 3.145; cf. Henricks, "Hsi K'ang," 284; and his *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 23–24.

72. SWALL, 5.197; Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 73–74.
73. *Li ji*, "Zhongyong," 31/52.1625b; cf. Legge, *Li chi*, 2:300.
74. SWALL, 5.197; Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 74.
75. *SWALL*, 5.197; Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 74. Cf. Liu An's 劉安 (ca. 179–122 BCE) *Huainanzi*, "Xiuwu xun" 修務訓, in Liu Wendian 劉文典 (1889–1958), ed., *Huainan Honglie jijie* 淮南鴻烈集解, commentaries by Xu Shen 許慎 (ca. 55–ca. 149) and Gao You 高誘 (ca. 168–212), *XBZZJC* (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1989), 19.638.
76. *SWALL*, 5.196, 203, 206; Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 72, 76–77, 82. The composition of the *Shao* 韶 music, also called *Dashao* 大韶, "Great Succession," is attributed to Shun 舜, see *Zhouli zhushu* 周禮注疏, commentary by Zheng Xuan, sub-commentary by Kong Yingda, *SSJZS*, 22.787c; Édouard Biot, trans., *Le Tcheou-li ou Rites des Tcheou* (1851; reprint [3 vols.], Taipei: Ch'eng wen, 1969), 2:29; *Li ji*, "Yue ji," 19/38.1534a-b; Legge, *Li chi*, 2:106. Confucius is said to have known the virtue of Shun by listening to the *Shao*; cf. *Lunyu* 3.25, in Cheng Shude 程樹德, ed., *Lunyu jishi* 論語集釋, *XBZZJC* (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1997), 3/6.222; D. C. Lau, trans., *The Analects* (London: Penguin Books, 1979), 71. For the story of Zhong Ziqi 鍾子期 who only from listening to the Bo Ya's 伯牙 zither melodies knew the mind of his friend, see *Lüshi chunqiu*, "Ben wei" 本味, 14.740; Knoblock and Riegel, *Lü Buwei*, 308; *Liezi* 列子, "Tang wen" 湯問, commentary by Zhang Zhan 張湛 (fourth century), *ZZJC*, 5.61; Angus C. Graham, trans., *The Book of Lieh-tzu* (London: Murray, 1960), 109–10. For Bian He 卞和, who twice had his feet cut when the uncarved jade he presented to the Chu kings was declared merely a stone by some experts, see *Hanfeizi*, "He shi" 和氏, in Chen Qiyou, ed., *Hanfeizi jishi* 韓非子集釋 (new edition, Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2000), 13.271–73; W. K. Liao, trans., *The Complete Works of Han Fei Tzu*, 2 vols. (London: Probsthain, 1939, 1959), 1:113–14.
77. Some instruments, such as *pipa* 琵琶, *zheng* 箏 zither, and *di* 笛 flute, have notes spaced close together and high-pitched sounds. Pieces played on these instruments tend to be fast in tempo. The musical effect of "vehemence" (*meng* 猛) makes people feel "agitated" (*zao* 躁) with thoughts "scattered" (*san* 散). By contrast, the notes of the *qin* 琴 and *se* 瑟 zithers are spacious and their sounds low-pitched, which cause people to experience "stillness" (*jing* 靜) with thoughts "concentrated" (*zhuan* 專). See *SWALL*, 5.215–16; Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 93–94; and my "Music without Emotion: Xi Kang Meets Hanslick," in *Power and Beauty: Eight Studies on Chinese Music*, ed. Luciana Galliano (Florence: Olschki, 2005), 51–52.
78. SWALL, 5.216; cf. Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 94.
79. Carroll C. Pratt, *The Meaning of Music: A Study in Psychological Aesthetics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1931), 191.

80. Susanne K. Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite, and Art*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), 228.
81. *SWALL*, 5.211; Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 88. Cf. *Zhuangzi*, "Qiwulun" 齊物論, in Guo Qingfan 郭慶藩 (1844–1896), ed., *Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋, commentaries by Guo Xiang and Cheng Xuanying 成玄英 (fl. 627–649), *XBZZJC*, (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1982), 2/1B.63; Angus C. Graham, trans., *Chuang-tzu*: *The Seven Inner Chapters and Other Writings from the Book Chuang-tzu* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1981), 52.
82. See my "Music without Emotion," 52, 58; cf. *Mao shi*, in *Mao shi zhushu* 毛詩注疏, commentary attributed to Mao Heng 毛亨 (third to second century BCE), annotations by Zheng Xuan, subcommentary by Kong Yingda, *SSJZS*, 1A.270a; Steven J. Van Zoeren, *Poetry and Personality* (Stanford: Stanford University Press 1991), 95.
83. Cf. Ding Guanzhi 丁冠之, "Lun Xi Kang de zhexue sixiang" 論嵇康的哲學思想, *Zhexue yanjiu* 哲學研究 4 (1980): 67.
84. Cf. Wagner, *Language, Ontology, and Political Philosophy*, 1.
85. Chan, *Two Visions of the Way*, 64; Wagner, *Language, Ontology, and Political Philosophy*, 123.
86. Cf. Chan, *Two Visions of the Way*, 30–32, 63–64.
87. See Wang Bi's commentary on *Laozi*, 1.2, in Lou Yulie 樓宇烈, ed., *Wang Bi ji jiaoshi* 王弼集校釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1980), 1.
88. For example, the "Dark" (*xuan* 玄, *Laozi*, 1.5), "beginning" (*shi* 始, 1.2), "root" (*gen* 根, 16.4), "ancestor/principle" (*zong* 宗, 70.2), "mother" (*mu* 母, 1.2), "highest thing" (*zhiwu* 至物, 6.1, Wang Bi commentary), the "diffuse" (*huhuang* 惚恍, 14.3). For comments on the formlessness and namelessness of the Dao, see Chan, *Two Visions of the Way*, 47–52, 64 passim; Wagner, *Craft of a Chinese Commentator*, esp. 266–70; and his *Language, Ontology, and Political Philosophy*, 50, 121–22 passim. See also Jude Soo Meng Chua, "The Nameless and Formless Dao as Metaphor and Imagery: Modeling the Dao in Wang Bi's *Laozi*," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 32, no. 3 (2005): 477–92.
89. Wang Bi makes this point in his shorter essay on the *Laozi*, the *Laozi weizhi lilüe* 老子微旨例略, also known as *Laozi zhilüe* 老子指略, in *Wang Bi ji jiaoshi*, 195; cf. Rudolf Wagner, *A Chinese Reading of the* Daodejing: *Wang Bi's Commentary on the* Laozi *with Critical Text and Translation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 83. Wagner translates *yin* 音 consistently as "sound"—see his *A Chinese Reading of the* Daodejing, 155, 262; and *Language, Ontology, and Political Philosophy*, 122. He also does so in the case of *wuyin* 五音; see his *Chinese Reading of the* Daodejing, 84, 155. Wagner argues that for Wang Bi *dayin* must be something unspecific, for otherwise it would have form and name, and could no longer stand for the "formless and

nameless" Dao. In contrast, "tone" (or "note") evidently has form, name, and specification. The difficulty is that the compound *wuyin*—in Wagner's translation "five sounds"—throughout early literature refers to the discrete "five tones (notes)" of the pentatonic scale. I contend that the *Laozi* and Wang Bi make no exception. It seems that Wang Bi's treatment of *dayin* (and of *daxiang* 大象, "great image," as well) is similar to that of *dayan zhi shu* 大衍之數, the "Number of Great Expansion," in his *Yijing* commentary, for which see Chan, *Two Visions of the Way*, 30–31. The idea of extra numeric extension is supported by the explanation of the relationship between *dayin* and *wuyin* in Wang Bi's *Laozi weizhi lilüe*, 195. Whereas the "great tone" stands out as the "One" which is inaudible and "useless," the "five tones" are audible, structured sounds and can be used. For a similar argument, see Cai Zhongde, *Zhongguo yinyue meixueshi*, 143–45, and Dai Lianzhang, "Xuanxue zhong de yinyue sixiang," 3–7; and his *Xuanzhi, xuanli yu wenhua fazhan*, 166–71.

90. *Laozi* 41.13; cf. Wagner, *A Chinese Reading of the Daodejing*, 262. Also see *Laozi weizhi lilüe*, 195; Wagner, ibid., 84.
91. *Laozi* 14.1; cf. Wagner, *A Chinese Reading of the Daodejing*, 163.
92. Doubted by Dai Lianzhang, *Xuanzhi xuanli yu wenhua fazhan*, 143.
93. *SWALL*, 5.213, 214; cf. Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 91.
94. Cf. Hou Wailu et al., *Zhongguo sixiang tongshi*, 3:167.
95. Allusion to *Zhouyi jianyi* 周易兼義, commentary by Wang Bi and Han Kangbo 韓康伯 (Jin dynasty), subcommentary by Kong Yingda, *SSJZS*, 1.18, "Tuan" 彖 commentary to hexagram 2, "Kun" 坤; see, too, "Xici xia" 繫辭下(Appended Statements, B), ibid., 8.86b, 8.89a; cf. Wang Chong's 王充 (27–100), *Lunheng*, "Ziran" 自然, in Huang Hui 黃暉, ed., *Lunheng jiaoshi* 論衡校釋, *XBZZJC* (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1999), 54/18.775; Alfred Forke, trans., *Lun-heng*, Part I, *Philosophical Essays of Wang Ch'ung* (1907; reprint, New York: Paragon Book Gallery, 1962), 92; *Xunzi*, "Li lun," 19/13.243; Knoblock, *Xunzi*, 3:66–67; *Zhuangzi*, "Dasheng" 達生, 19/7A.632; Burton Watson, trans., *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu* (New York: Columbia University, 1968), 198; *Huainanzi*, "Yuandao xun" 原道訓, 1.1–5; Eva Kraft, trans., "Zum *Huai-nan-tzu*: Einführung, Übersetzung (Kapitel I und II) und Interpretation," *Monumenta Serica* 16 (1957): 200–201, 207–11.
96. Possibly referring to *Zuo zhuan*, Zhao 25 (517 BCE), 51.2107; Legge, *Ch'un Ts'ew*, 5:708.
97. SWALL, 5.197; cf. Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 73.
98. "Taishi zhen," in *Xi Kang ji jiaozhu* 10.309. In the *Yiwei qianzao du* 易緯乾鑿度, *Xiaojing gouming jue* 孝經鉤命決, and *Liezi*, the process of transformation from primal chaos without any differentiation to "substance" (*zhi* 質) is as follows: "Great Interchangeability" (*taiyi* 太易), "Great Commencement" (*taichu* 太初), "Great Beginning" (*taishi* 太始), "Great Simplicity" (*taisu* 太素), and "Great Culmination" (*taiji* 太

極); see Yasui Kōzan 安居香山 and Nakamura Shōbachi 中村璋八, eds., *Jūshū Isho shūsei* 重修緯書集成, 6 vols. (Tokyo: Meitoku shuppansha, 1981–92), 1:39–40; 5:76–77; *Liezi*, "Tianrui" 天瑞, 1.2; Graham, *The Book of Lieh-tzu*, 18–19; and Isabelle Robinet, "Lun Taiyi sheng shui" 論太一生水, *Daojia wenhua yanjiu* 道家文化研究 17 (1999): 332–39.

99. "Mingdan lun," in *Xi Kang ji jiaozhu*, 6.249; Henricks, "Hsi K'ang," 265–66, and *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 127. Hou Wailu et al., *Zhongguo sixiang tongshi*, 3:171–72, noted that this essay seems to connect with the debate on "capacity" (*cai*) and "nature" (*xing*).
100. SWALL, 5.208; cf. Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 85.
101. SWALL, 5.197–98; Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 73.
102. SWALL, 5.197, 200; Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 73, 76.
103. One may think of Zhuangzi's "small harmony" (*xiaohe* 小和) and "great harmony" (*dahe* 大和), different from "grand harmony"; see *Zhuangzi*, "Qiwulun," 2/1B.46.
104. SWALL, 5.197; Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 73.
105. SWALL, 5.199; cf. Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 75.
106. Differently, the canonical "Yue ji" ascribes "images" to sound. Of the former kings it is said that "they regulated the appellations of the pitch-pipes and small and great notes, and put in order the sequence of their beginning and end (scale) as an image of processes and actions"; see *Li ji*, "Yue ji," 19/38.1535b; cf. Legge, *Li chi*, 2:109. Or, "the clear and distinct [notes] are an image of heaven, the wide and great [ones], are an *image* of earth"; see *Li ji*, "Yue ji," 19/38.1536b; cf. Legge, *Li chi*, 2:111. Note that one paragraph (*zhang*) of the "Yue ji" bears the title "Yue xiang" 樂象—"The Images of Music"; see my "Thematische Progression," 93.
107. *SWALL,* 5.217. Xi Kang argues: "Now, it cannot be that there is no dominant force/factor in delight or anger, and also that there is no dominant force/factor in grief or joy. Therefore pleasure and sorrow simultaneously appear. If we were using tones that are [emotionally] one-sided and fixed and containing sounds all of one kind, the emotions released and manifested would in each case match with their division, then how can this simultaneously control a host of different ideas, and together release many different feelings?" (夫唯無主於喜怒, 亦無主於哀樂, 故歡慼俱見。若資偏固之音, 含一致之聲, 其所發明, 各當其分, 則焉能兼御群理, 總發眾情耶); cf. Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 96. Xi Kang illustrates his claim by an example: a party of guests fills the hall; drunk with wine they play the zither. Some guests are delighted and happy; others are sad and shed tears. "It is not that they were led to grief by one thing, and brought to joy by another. There has been no change in the tones from what they were playing before, yet pleasure and sorrow both result. Is this not [a case of] 'blowing differently through the ten thousand'?" (非進哀於彼, 導樂於此也。其音無變於昔, 而歡慼

並用。斯非吹萬不同耶); *SWALL,* 5.217; cf. Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 95. In this connection, consider the argument of Wang Bi in *Laozi weizhi lilüe* (196) that "[h]aving a specification, there will, as a consequence, be something that is not included" 有分則有不兼; Wagner, *Language, Ontology, and Political Philosophy*, 72.

108. *Zhuangzi*, 14/5B.502; Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 156.
109. *Laozi*, 46.1; cf. Chan, *Two Visions of the Way*, 51, 138–39.
110. Cf. *Li ji*, "Yue ji," 19/38.1534c; "Qin fu" 琴賦 (Rhapsody on the *Qin*), in *Xi Kang ji jiaozhu*, 2.108–9.
111. SWALL, 5.219–20; Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 98–99.
112. For *datong*, see *SWALL*, 5.215; Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 93, with nn. 92, 95. Cf. *Zhuangzi*, "Zaiyou" 在宥, 11/4B.395; Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 124; *Lüshi chunqiu*, "Youshi" 有始, 13.659; Knoblock and Riegel, *Lü Buwei*, 282; *Liezi*, "Huangdi" 黃帝, 2.22; Graham, *The Book of Lieh-tzu*, 46.
113. Donald Munro aptly observes that the "structural image" provides not only "information about the structural relations (a factual matter)," but also supplies "suggestions as how one should feel about and react to them (an evaluative matter)"; see his *Images of Human Nature: A Sung Portrait* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 32.
114. *Huainanzi*, "Lanming xun," 6.199; Charles Le Blanc, trans., *Huai-nan Tzu: Philosophical Synthesis in Early Han Thought* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1985), 133.
115. *SWALL,* 5.223; cf. Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 102–103. Dai Mingyang recognizes the allusion to "Kongzi xian ju" 孔子閒居 (Confucius in Leisure at Home) where the "three nots" (*san wu* 三無) are discussed. These are "music without sound" (無聲之樂), "ritual without embodiment" (無體之禮), and "mourning without garment" (無服之喪). More important, perhaps, is the already mentioned passage from the *Lüshi chunqiu*, see n. 51 above.
116. Donald Holzman, "Protest in Third-Century China," in *En suivant la voie royale: Mélanges offerts en hommage à Léon Vandermeersch*, ed. Jacques Gernet and Marc Kalinowski, with collaboration of Jean-Pierre Diény (Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1997), 353.
117. *Shi ji*, 35.1563–65; Édouard Chavannes, trans., *Les mémoires historiques de Se-Ma Ts'ien*, 6 vols. (1895–1905; reprint, Paris: Leroux; Maisonneuve, 1967), 4:154–55. For the "Guan Cai lun," see *Xi Kang ji jiaozhu*, 6.244–48; Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 121–25; cf. Holzman, "Protest in Third-Century China," 355–56.
118. For "Taishi zhen," see *Xi Kang ji jiaozhu*, 10.309–14; parts of this essay have been translated in Henricks, "Hsi K'ang," 265–66, 267–68.
119. Henricks, "Hsi K'ang," 266–67; Holzman, "Protest in Third-Century China," 354–55.
120. *SWALL*, 5.223; cf. Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 102. Cf.

Liu Taotu 劉騊駼 (fl. 107–113), "Xuangen fu" 玄根賦 (Rhapsody on the Dark Root), also referred to as "Xuangen song" 玄根頌 (Eulogy on the Dark Root), in *Taiping yulan*, 975.5b. Cf. *Yantie lun*, "Cuobi" 錯幣, in Wang Liqi 王利器, ed., *Yantie lun jiaozhu* 鹽鐵論校注, *XBZZJC* (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1992), 4/1.56; *Shangshu xuanji qin* 尚書琁璣鈐, quoted in Wang Yanshou's 王延壽 (fl. 163) commentary to Zhang Zai's 張載 (fl. ca. 290) "Lu Lingguan dian fu" 魯靈光殿賦 (Rhapsody on the Hall of Divine Brilliance in Lu), in Xiao Tong 蕭統 (501–531) et al., ed., *Wenxuan* 文選, commentary by Li Shan 李善 (d. 689), Hu Kejia 胡克家 (1757–1816) edition (reprint, Beijing: Zhonghua, 1983), 11.19b.

121. For the phrase *cheng shuaibi* 承衰弊, see, for example, the memorial of Chen Zhong 陳忠, dated 116 CE, in *Hou Han shu* 46.1561; Cao Pi 曹丕 (186–226), "Dianlun" 典論 (Authoritative Discourses), in *Quan Sanguo wen* 全三國文, 8.12b. Cf. the related expression "inheriting [the condition of] decay of the hundred kings" (承百王之弊), as found in *Han shu*, 6.212.
122. For the phrase *cheng tian li wu* 承天理物, see *Han shu* 27B1.1458; *Baihutong* 5.217; cf. Tjan Tjoe Som, *Po Hu T'ung*, 2:461.
123. Emphasis added. "Governing by simplicity and easiness" (簡易之治) became an ideal of the early Han political agenda and remained an important goal throughout the dynasty. For important references, see *Huainanzi*, "Taizu xun" 泰族訓, 20.674; Wang Bao 王褒 (ca. 60–50 BCE), "Sizi jiangde lun" 四子講德論, in *Wenxuan*, 51.18a; *Quan Han wen* 全漢文, 42.8b; Huan Lin 桓麟 (before 147–after 185) 太尉劉寬 (Inscription for Grand Marshal Liu Kuan [120–185]"), in *Quan Hou Han wen* 全後漢文, 27.11b.
124. Emphasis added. Cf. *Lunyu* 15.5, in *Lunyu jishi*, 15/31.1062; Lau, *Analects*, 132; *Laozi* 3.6; Wagner, *A Chinese Reading of the Daodejing*, 130; *Huainanzi*, "Yuandao xun," 1.24.
125. *SWALL*, 5.221–22; cf. Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 101.
126. Chen Shou 陳壽 (233–297), *Sanguo zhi* 三國志, commentary by Pei Songzhi 裴松之 (372–451) (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1959), 9.297.
127. SWALL, 5.221–22; Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 101.
128. Quoting the *Shijing* ode "Wen wang" 文王 ("King Wen," *Mao* 235/6/4); cf. Bernhard Karlgren, trans., *The Book of Odes* (Stockholm: Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, 1950), 186.
129. Note that the expression "cherishing loyalty and 'holding dear righteousness'" (懷忠抱義) occurs as a tetrasyllabic line in "Lin gaotai" 臨高臺 ("Near the High Terrace"), one of He Chengtian's 何承天 (ca. 369–447) early fourth century imitations of the *Guchui naoge* 鼓吹鐃歌 (Nao Songs of Drum and Flute Music); see Shen Yue 沈約 (441–513), comp., *Song shu* 宋書 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1974), 22.666. For the last part of the quotation, cf. *Zhuangzi*, "Qiwulun," 2/1B.79, 110–11, "Qiushui" 秋水, 17/6B.593; "Dasheng," 19/7A.658; Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 43, 49, 184, 205.

130. SWALL, 5.222; Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 101–102.
131. SWALL, 5.222; Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 102.
132. SWALL, 5.222; Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 102. Quoting from the "Tuan" commentary to hexagram 2, "Kun" 坤, "The Receptive," *Zhouyi*, 1.18a; James Legge, trans., *The Sacred Books of China: The Texts of Confucianism*, part 2, *The Yi king* (1882; reprint, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1977), 214.
133. SWALL, 5.223; Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 103.
134. See n. 40 above.
135. *Lüshi chunqiu*, "Da (Tai) yue" 大樂, 5.255–56; cf. Knoblock and Riegel, *Lü Buwei*, 137.
136. The issue needs closer examination, which is clearly beyond the scope of this article. For an extended discussion, see my unpublished manuscript "Privileged Access: Cognition and Emotion in Xunzi, Liu An, and Xi Kang."
137. *Xunzi*, "Bugou," 3/2.30; cf. Knoblock, *Xunzi*, 1:179.
138. *Xunzi*, "Ai Gong," 31/20.355; cf. Knoblock, *Xunzi*, 3:261.
139. SWALL, 5.225; Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 105.
140. SWALL, 5.224; Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation*, 105.
141. Roger T. Ames, "'The Art of Rulership' Chapter of the *Huai Nan Tzu*: A Practicable Taoism," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 8 (1981): 225. For Wang Bi's attempt, see Chan, *Two Visions of the Way*, 18–19, 68–88; Wagner, *Language, Ontology, and Political Philosophy*, chap. 3.
142. See Griet Vankeerberghen, "Emotions and the Actions of the Sage: Recommendations for an Orderly Heart in *Huainanzi*," *Philosophy East and West* 45, no. 4 (1995): 529–36.

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6

The Ideas of Illness, Healing, and Morality in Early Heavenly Master Daoism

Chi-Tim Lai

Although many scholars of Daoism have noticed the close interaction between early Heavenly or Celestial Master Daoism (Tianshi dao 天師道) and popular religion in the Han period (206 BCE–220 CE), it is important to identify the distinctive features of the former and examine how they impacted on the latter. Michel Strickmann recognizes the importance of this task in observing that "it is clear that [Heavenly Master] Taoism really amounted to a religious reformation in the China of late antiquity."[1]

The early third-century *Dianlüe* 典略, quoted by the commentator Pei Songzhi 裴松之 (372–451) in the *Sanguo zhi* 三國志, provides the earliest extant historical evidence of the religious teaching of early Heavenly Master Daoism in connection with its ideas about good and evil and the link between morality and disease. In particular, the *Dianlüe* refers to the early Heavenly Master ritual of invoking heavenly officials and praying for the healing of illness:

> The ritual of invitation and prayer involved writing down the sick person's name, along with a statement of confession of their sins. Three sets were made: one was sent up to heaven and was placed on a mountain; one was buried in the earth; and one was sunk in water. These were called "Personal Writs to the Three Officials [of Heaven, Earth, and Water]" (*sanguan shoushu*).
> 請禱之法, 書病人姓名, 說服罪之意, 作三通。其一上之天, 著山上, 其一埋之地, 其一沉之水, 謂之三官手書。[2]

Ethical, religious, and ritual concerns cohere in the healing ritual of early Heavenly Master Daoism. Most scholars consider the healing ritual of sending "Personal Writs to the Three Officials" (also translated as "Handwritten Documents") as practiced in the early Heavenly Master community to be a prototype of the later Daoist ritual of the presentation of petitions (*shangzhang* 上章). The submission of the Personal Writs was made first to the Official of Heaven by placing a set of confessions on a mountain, followed by burying a second set addressed to the Official of Earth, and submerging in water a third set addressed to the Official of Water. The confession records a sick person's evil deeds and is presented to the Three Officials to seek pardon for the devotee's sins and healing.[3] Such personal confession was held by the early Heavenly Master community to be a significant way to disperse a person's sins and eliminate subsequent judgment from the heavenly administration.

Apart from the one historical record that is preserved in the *Dianlüe*, there are few references to the continuation of the healing practice of petitioning the Three Officials in the Heavenly Master scriptures of the Six Dynasties (220–584), and for this reason scholars have often mistakenly concluded that the Heavenly Master community no longer practiced it after the Eastern Jin period (317–420). Instead of the Personal Writs to the Three Officials, it is often suggested that the "Protocol of the Twelve Hundred Officials" (*qian erbai guanyi* 千二百官儀) was later adopted as the primary ritual of presenting petitions in Heavenly Master Daoism.[4] Consequently, little in-depth study of the distinctive theological system that underlies the Personal Writs to the Three Officials has been undertaken.[5] Although scholars have long realized that early Heavenly Master Daoism emphasized the "confession of sins" (*shouguo* 首過) or "recollection of sins" (*siguo* 思過), the underlying belief system of the Three Officials, which informs the rites of confession and petition to the heavenly deities, remains largely unexplored.[6] Rather, in most cases, scholars quickly pass over the practice of confession to the Three Officials in early Heavenly Master Daoism and move on to examine the medieval Daoist notion of the Three Principles (*sanyuan* 三元) in the scriptures of Shangqing 上清 and Lingbao 靈寶,[7] the Retreats of the Three Principles (三元齋), the rites of Casting Dragons and Tablets (*tou longjian yi* 投龍簡儀),[8] and the official Sanyuan festival (三元節) in the Tang period (618–907).[9] I believe that revisiting the rite of confession to the Three Officials and its underlying belief system will help us better understand how early Heavenly Master Daoism developed its religious teaching, which was

characterized by a distinctive moral sense of sin (*zui* 罪) and a strong emphasis on the religious rite of repentance (*chan* 懺). In this chapter, I argue that the belief system of the Three Officials of Heaven, Earth, and Water (*tiandeshui sanguan* 天地水三官) forms the key link that integrates all the religious beliefs and ritual practices of early Heavenly Master Daoism, such as the notion of sin and punishment, the invocation of officials to heal disease, the confession of and reflection on misdeeds, the disease-infusion of the dead, and the Retreat (*zhai* 齋) for the redemption of sins. Moreover, this chapter contends that it is the belief in the Three Officials that significantly distinguishes this new religious movement from the popular religious beliefs of the late Han period as exemplified by the "apocryphal" texts (*chenwei* 讖緯) and tomb-quelling texts (*zhenmu wen* 鎮墓文).

Consciousness of Sin and Indictment in Early Heavenly Master Daoism

During the mid-second century CE, a new religious movement, the ecclesia of Heavenly Master Daoism, emerged in the Hanzhong 漢中 area of the Shu 蜀 region (modern northern Sichuan). This movement venerated Zhang Ling, or Zhang Daoling 張道陵 as its founder.[10] According to the founding myth of Heavenly Master Daoism, in 142 Zhang Daoling received a revelation from the "newly appeared Lord Lao" (*xinchu* Laojun 新出老君) in a stone chamber on Mount Quting 渠亭 in the Commandery of Shu, and was conferred authority over the new religious community and the pantheon of gods and demons under the "Orthodox One Covenant with the Powers" (*Zhengyi mengwei* 正一盟威).[11]

Early Heavenly Master Daoism placed great emphasis on the concepts of sin (*zui* 罪) and guilt (*jiu* 咎), and the precepts (*jie* 戒), teachings (*jiao* 教), and rites of prayers for the absolution of sin (*jiezui* 解罪). In this context, it disseminated the idea that sin, crime (*guo* 過), and evil (*wu* 惡) all pointed to certain personal moral shortcomings. Often, it is suggested that the moral system of Heavenly Master Daoism was largely based on traditional Confucian ethical values, especially in its definition of good and evil.[12] For instance, in the *Commands and Admonitions for the Families of the Great Dao* (*Dadao jialing jie* 大道家令戒), a short treatise that sets out the theological foundation of early Heavenly Master Daoism and dates from about the mid-third century, Daoist families that had been selected by the Most High (*taishang* 太上) as the "seed people (*zhongmin* 種民)[13] for the world to come" were instructed to perform good deeds:

All of our households should transform one another through loyalty and filial piety, so that fathers are magnanimous and sons filial, husbands faithful and wives chaste, elder brothers respectful and younger brothers obedient. Mornings and evenings you should practice "clarity and stillness." Root out all covetousness, abandon the pursuit of personal profit, and rid yourself of desire. Reform your evil cravings. Pity the poor and cherish the old. Be liberal in supplying others and in giving way to them. Drive from your heart excesses of jealousy, joy, and anger so that your emotions are constantly harmonious and your eyes and belly in accord. Aid the kingdom in strengthening its mandate. Abandon all of your past evil pursuits. Those who from today onward practice good actions will find disaster and disease melting away from them, and become the seed people for the world to come.
但當戶戶自相化以忠孝, 父慈子孝, 夫信婦貞, 兄敬弟順。朝暮清靜, 斷絕貪心, 棄利去欲, 改更惡腸。憐貧愛老, 好施出讓。除去淫妒, 喜怒情念, 常和同腹目。助國壯命, 棄往日之惡, 從今日之善行, 災消無病, 得為後世種民。[14]

The virtues that were advocated by early Heavenly Master Daoism such as loyalty (*zhong* 忠), filial piety (*xiao* 孝), trust (*xin* 信), chastity (*zhen* 貞), respect (*jing* 敬), obedience (*shun* 順), commiseration (*lian* 憐), love (*ai* 愛), offering (*shi* 施), and modesty (*rang* 讓) can of course be found in the Confucian classics of the Han period; but there remains a significant divergence between the two. A distinctive difference is that early Heavenly Master Daoism emphasized a close connection between the disease and suffering of the sick and their evil deeds. Disease and calamity were regarded as a kind of divine punishment for moral misdeeds, and not only the miscreant but also the miscreant's family members could be afflicted with misfortune if these misdeeds were not absolved. Furthermore, misfortune caused by the hidden evil deeds of the deceased was said to pass on to their descendants for several generations.

Such religious and moral teachings were widely taught and practiced in the early Heavenly Master community in the Hanzhong area under Zhang Lu 張魯 (fl. 190–220). The Biography of Zhang Lu in the *Sanguo zhi* states:

[Zhang] Lu then occupied the Hanzhong area, instructed people in the Way of Demons [and] titled himself Lord Master. Those who came to learn the "Way" from him were called Demon Soldiers. [Zhang Lu] required them to be faithful and not to deceive. When [his believers] got ill, [Lu] asked them to confess their offenses.

> 魯遂據漢中, 以鬼道教民, 自號師君。其來學道者, 初皆名鬼卒。皆教以誠信不欺詐, 有病自首其過。[15]

The *Xuandu lüwen* 玄都律文, another early Heavenly Masters scripture, further states that "the reason for people becoming sick is that they cover up their evil deeds, because of which they are deservedly sick. Indeed, the cause of illness is not food, cold or other reasons, but rather because people transgress precepts and offend codes. For this reason their souls and spirits are confined and indicted" (夫人有疾病者, 坐於過惡, 陰掩不見, 故應以病。因緣非飲食風寒溫氣而起也。由其人犯法違戒, 神魂拘謫).[16]

The basic tenet of early Heavenly Master Daoism of a causal link between misfortune and sin is grounded in a belief system that was built upon a metaphoric framework of a departmentalized otherworldly administration and judiciary, namely the "Department of Heaven" (*tiancao* 天曹).[17] This heavenly official department was a judicial administration wherein the sins and merits of the adept were recorded. Based on this record, divine examination and inquisition (*kaojiao* 考校) were then executed. As is generally agreed, the bureaucratic logic of an otherworldly administration has been one of the abiding features of Chinese religion since at least Shang times.[18] According to this system, it is believed that the transgression of moral codes and rules brings divine punishment. Identifying themselves as "heavenly people" (*tianmin* 天民), the early Heavenly Masters took as their mandate the transmission of Daoist precepts (*daojie* 道戒) to enforce moral norms through the announcement of the punishments and rewards to be meted out by heavenly officials.[19]

The scriptures of early Heavenly Master Daoism document this religio-ethical principle of examination and punishment by heavenly officials in vivid detail. The examination, judgment, calculation, and punishment of sin and evil were believed to be carried out by a spiritual bureaucracy. For example, the *Commandments of the Heavenly Master from the One and Orthodox Canon* (*Zhengyi fawen tianshi jiaojie kejing* 正一法文天師教戒科經), which dates from the mid-third century and contains some of the earliest documents of Heavenly Master Daoism, asserts:

> There are heavenly officials and soldiers in the bodies of those who believe in the Dao. Once they [believers] transgress the precepts and fall in anger, the spirits of their bodies will not guard them anymore, and the officials and soldiers will ascend to heaven [and] report the misconduct and sins of the believers. When sins accumulate, death

> will come as punishment. The left tally records life, while the right tally registers death. Those who have engaged in slight misconduct will bring sin into their own bodies, while those who commit heavy evil will pass disasters and misfortune onto their descendants.
> 又奉道者，身中有天曹吏兵。數犯嗔恚，其神不守，吏兵上詣天曹，白人罪過，過積罪死。左契除生，右契著死。禍小者罪身，罪多者殃及子孫。[20]

There is a clear system of divine judgment and human responsibility expounded in the *Zhengyi fawen tianshi jiaojie kejing*, namely, (1) everyone's misconduct and sins come under the scrutiny of heavenly officials, who are believed to live within one's body; (2) all misconduct and sins are registered in a record that is kept by a heavenly bureaucracy; (3) punishment is expressed in the number of days by which one's lifespan is shortened (*suan* 筭); (4) punishment is proportional to one's accumulated sins, and the sinner's lifespan is shortened until it expires; and (5) if the hidden sins of the deceased were not fully redeemed at the end of their lives, then their descendants must bear their punishment, largely in the form of suffering, calamity, and disease.

This religious-moral system administrated by a bureaucracy of heavenly officials may not be an entirely new invention of early Heavenly Master Daoism during Zhang Lu's regime in the Hanzhong area. We can find similar religio-ethical principles in the apocryphal texts (*chenwei*) of the two Han Dynasties and in the *Scripture of Great Peace* (*Taiping jing* 太平經).[21] According to the apocryphal texts, there are deities in heaven and on earth who control the judgment of human transgression and life destiny. They are known as Siguo shen 司過神 (Director of Sins) and Siming shen 司命神 (Director of Allotted Lifespans).[22] These deities make judgments by awarding a longer life for deeds of merit and a shorter life for evil deeds. In other words, those who carry out good deeds acquire longevity, whereas those who commit evil suffer premature death as a punishment (行善得壽, 行惡則夭).[23] Similarly, the *Taiping jing* states that there is a spiritual bureaucracy that controls human life and birth and keeps a record of people's good and evil deeds. Punishment is likewise expressed in the number of days by which one's lifespan is reduced. For instance, the *Taiping jing* states:

> Heaven will grant a person well-being when they conduct good deeds, so that they keep wishing for a state of wealth. Although a person's descendants may not inherit all his wealth, he can still wish for his descendants to inherit something from him. Why do people commit crimes and, in consequence, [have their lives] forever diminished?

> People [commit crimes] because they believe that they can live out their [natural] lifespan, but they do not know that Heaven has sent deities to record their misconduct. No matter one's evil deeds are light or heavy, Heaven knows them all and records them in the Book of Merit and Evil. Based upon this record, Heaven examines and indicts people's crimes day and night and shortens their lifespan accordingly.
> 天見其善使可安, 為更求富有。子孫雖不盡得, 尚有所望。何為作惡久滅亡？自以當可竟年，不知天遣神往記之。過無大小，天皆知之, 簿疏善惡之籍, 日月拘校, 前後除算減年。[24]

Echoing this statement, the early Heavenly Master scripture, the *Xiang'er Commentary on the Laozi* (老子想爾注) expounds that "those who indulge in killing should not be saved, the disaster [that this] causes will afflict them and their descendants."[25] The *Zhengyi fawen tianshi jiaojie kejing* also mentions that "those who commit excessive sins will bring calamity on their descendants" (罪多者殃及子孫). In short, these shared religio-ethical principles of the late Han period consistently promoted the view that people's evil deeds brought forth divine punishment and could cause disaster and misfortune to be passed on to their descendants.

The judicial term *zuizhe* 罪謫 (sin and indictment) is also found in the *Taiping jing* and the "tomb-quelling texts" of the late Han period, and refers to the punishment of sin.[26] According to the *Taiping jing*, "the punishment of sin is determined in accordance with the crimes being indicted, whether they are slight or heavy" (罪罰隨考者輕重).[27] In this connection, the *Taiping jing* puts forward the idea of "inherited evil" (*chengfu* 承負).[28] First, it states that people are afflicted with misfortune and calamity because they are bearing the punishment for the sins of their ancestors. "Stupid people cannot foresee," the *Taiping jing* declares, "and thus cause their descendants to be afflicted by calamity. This calamity cannot be avoided, and is passed on to descendants. Who should we blame for such faults?"[29] Second, it uses the term *tianshi* 天師 (Heavenly Master) in stating that the aim of Heavenly Master teaching is to absolve all diseases and calamities with which people are afflicted as a consequence of *chengfu*, that is to say, punishment inherited from the sins of their ancestors.[30]

We also find the terms *zuizhe*, *chuyang* 除殃 (dispelling disasters), and *jiezhe* 解謫 (dispersing indictments) in the tomb-quelling texts of the late Han period, which were placed in tombs to assure safe passage of the deceased to the netherworld.[31] In particular, to disperse the sins and indictments of the dead, a grave-securing writ was often written in the

name of Lord of Heaven (*tiandi* 天帝), commanding the administration and officials in the netherworld to expunge the sins and sufferings of the dead.[32] As Rao Zongyi 饒宗頤 has pointed out, the "art of dispersal and elimination" (*jiechu shu* 解除術) used in the tomb-quelling texts to dispel the indictment of the dead and eliminate the suffering of the living originates from ancient Chinese religion.[33] The tomb-quelling texts also often use the terms *zhulian* 注連 (contracted infusion), *fuzhu* 復注 (contagious infusion), and *shizhu* 尸注 (corpus infusion) to refer to a kind of epidemic possession by demons and ghosts. In ancient China, it was mostly believed that the as yet undispersed sins and indictments of the dead and "plaints from beyond the tomb" (*zhongsong* 塚訟) would bring disease and misfortune to the living. Concurrently appearing in the traditional literature of Chinese medicine, the word *zhu* 注 (infusion or miasma) represents a class of ailments that behave like "epidemic possession."[34] In the chapter "Explaining the Diseases" (*shi jibing* 釋疾病) in the *Explanations of Terms* (*Shiming* 釋名), we read that "*zhu* [means] when one dies, another is infected because of the contagion of the *qi*-exhalation of infusion."[35] During the Han period, people generally believed that the insatiable spirits of the deceased might return and cause the living to become ill.[36] To protect the living from dangers connected with the dead, the function of the tomb-quelling texts was to divert and eliminate the infusion of demonic breath (*guiqi* 鬼氣) that would inflict adverse effects, illness, and misfortune on surviving family members. A text on a Dunhuang tomb-quelling bottle (*zhenmu ping* 鎮墓瓶) that dates to the thirty-first year of the Jianxing 建興 era (343 CE) of the Former Liang 前涼 dynasty claims to protect the living from any dangers connected with the departed—one Wu Renjiang 吳仁姜—from the time of his burial:

> On the eighth day of the third month of the thirty-first year when Wu Renjiang died came the infusion-bringer of heaven, the infusion-bringer of earth, the infusion-bringer of the year, the infusion-bringer of annual times, the infusion-bringer of the month, the infusion-bringer of the day and the infusion-bringer of the hour. The living and the dead follow separate paths; none of these infusions will occur for thousands of years, as decreed by the statutes and ordinances.
> 卅一年三月八日，吳仁姜之身死。天注、地注、年注、歲注、月注、日注, 時注。生死異路, 千秋萬歲, 不得相注仵。如律令。[37]

Not surprisingly, the idea that the emanation of demon infusions from the unsettled dead constituted the source of illness and misfortune

among the living was widely transmitted in early Heavenly Master Daoism.[38] The extant *Dengzhen yinjue* 登真隱訣 (Secret Instructions for Ascent into the Ranks of the Perfected) provides a clear account of the ritual presentation of petitions (*shangzhang*) for the invocation of heavenly officials (*qingquan* 請官) to heal disease.[39] Referring to the "old rites of the Heavenly Master" (天師舊儀) as practiced in the second century in the Hanzhong community, the *Dengzhen yinjue* includes a list of incantations to invoke heavenly officials from the section of the pantheon that was in charge of different spheres of illness—for instance: (1) One should send up "a petition for attacking demons" (擊鬼章) if one is "infested with exhalation and demon-disease" (注氣鬼病); (2) "One should invite a Lord of the Upper South with one hundred and twenty officials and generals (南上君官將百二十人) to come down together . . . to cure the sick person within three days by eliminating disaster and stopping the visiting of infusions"; and (3) "One should invite a Lord of Sending *Qi*-energy and Resolving Calamity with ten thousand officials and generals (運氣解厄君兵十萬人) if a petitioner's household is afflicted with an infusion of exhalations and is suffering from trials and injuries due to deaths of family members."[40]

The early Heavenly Master belief that the unsettled dead caused illness and calamity among the living continued well into the Six Dynasties. For example, a fifth-century Heavenly Master scripture entitled the *Book of the Hymnal Rules of Lord Lao* (*Laojun yinsong jiejing* 老君音誦誡經) states: "If the indictments against the parents and grandparents of a Daoist adept or Daoist priest in the netherworld cannot be released, then the infusion of the dead will return to their descendants" (道官道民，其先亡祖曾父母，幽謫不解，復注子孫).[41] The "Petition for Preventing Reconnection with the Dead" (斷亡人復連章), which is featured in the *Petition Almanac of Master Red Pine* (*Chisongzi zhangli* 赤松子章曆), explains that "the deceased ancestors are causing misfortune [to the patient] by reestablishing contact [through infusion], thus endlessly perpetuating this disease. The whole household fears that as long as the dead are not isolated, the contagion can never be stopped."[42] In the petition, the client goes on to implore ten thousand Lords of Personal Destiny to dissolve the *qi*-exhalation of the reconnected dead and pray for disconnection (本命君十萬人為某解除亡人復連之氣).

All of the aforementioned religious documents of the late Han period—that is, the *Taiping jing*, tomb-quelling texts, and scriptures of early Heavenly Master Daoism—shared the belief that the Department of Heaven and its officials examined the good and evil deeds of human

beings and that disease caused by the unsettled dead in the netherworld could seize the living. These popular religious beliefs, deeply rooted in the everyday life of the common people, linked the three spheres of heaven, earth, and the netherworld. All human deeds, both good and evil, were recorded in the "Register of Lifespan," which was believed to calculate one's cumulative culpability for disasters, disease, and death. The hidden and unredeemed sins of the deceased might also pass on to one's descendants and cause the living noxious emanations of all sorts. Given these common religious features, the belief that calamity arises from divine retribution cannot be attributed exclusively to the early Heavenly Master community. Rather, early Heavenly Master teachings can hardly be understood apart from the popular religious beliefs of the Eastern Han period (25–220). The then new Daoist movement naturally inherited some of the existing religious beliefs on sin and indictment by heavenly authority, as described above. The important point, however, as the next section will demonstrate, is that it also added to them distinctively new elements.

Summons and Inquest, the Absolution of Sins, and the Covenant with the Three Officials

The Daoist adept's preoccupation with sin is best exemplified by the famous calligrapher Wang Xizhi's 王羲之 (303–361)[43] letter "Guannu tie" 官奴帖, which was written in the Eastern Jin period.[44] The devotion of Wang Xizhi's family to Heavenly Master Daoism is well known. Like other adherents of Heavenly Master Daoism in the north in the fourth century, Wang Xizhi's family fled south and brought the religion to the new Eastern Jin capital Jiankang 建康.[45] Guannu was the wife of Wang Xianzhi 王獻之 (344–388), the youngest son of Wang Xizhi, and had a daughter named Yurun 玉潤. The "Guannu tie" was not a *zhang*-petition, but a letter written by Wang Xizhi to the Daoist Master Xu Mai 許邁 (300–349),[46] in which he showed his apprehension about a prolonged illness of his granddaughter, described her symptoms, and asks the Daoist Master for help. As an adherent of Heavenly Master Daoism, Wang Xizhi blames the mishap on himself and confesses his sins, which, he believes, are the immediate cause of Yurun's disease.[47] The "Guannu tie" reads:

> The young daughter of Guannu, Yurun, has been sick for more than ten days. They did not let me know. Yesterday, Yurun suddenly contracted a chronic disease and became worse. Moreover, she is also suffering from ulceration on her head, which does not worry

> me too much. What makes me so anxious that my heart seems to be on fire and I am unable to speak out is her chronic disease, as few could survive it. In the past, the family was not afflicted with such incurable diseases. The advent of this disease is my fault, as I, the head of this family, failed to discipline myself in the cultivation [of the Dao] and teach the family, and violated the rules and precepts [of the Dao]. All of these faults triggered this misfortune. At present, I can only confess my sins and wait for punishment. My words are not aimless, but uttered because of Guannu. I have failed in [the faith of] the Dao and virtue and feel ashamed before you. What more can I say to Heaven?
> 官奴小女玉潤，病來十餘日，了不令民知。昨來忽發痼，至今轉篤，又苦頭癰。頭癰以潰, 尚不足憂, 痼病少有差者, 憂之燋心, 良不事可言. 頃者艱疾未之有, 良由民為家長, 不能剋己懃修, 訓化上下, 多犯科誡, 以至於此。民唯歸誠, 待罪而已。此非復常言常辭, 想官奴辭以具, 不復多向, 上負道德, 下愧先生, 天夫復何言。[48]

As the head of his family, Wang Xizhi assumed full responsibility for causing his granddaughter a life-threatening illness as punishment for his sins, and expressed his repentance for his "violation of the rules and precepts" and failings "in [the faith of] the Dao and virtue."[49] As stated, the "Guannu tie" is not a petition. Rather, to cure Yurun's disease Wang Xizhi went to the Heavenly Master diocese (*Tianshi zhi* 天師治) to which he belonged, to ask the diocesan "libationer" (*jijiu* 祭酒) to present a *zhang*-petition to request the heavenly officials to descend and spare his granddaughter. In the *Chisongzi zhangli*, there is a *zhang*-petition called the "Petition for Eliminating Disaster and Evil and Protection from Prolonged Disease and the Deletion of Life" (疾病困重收滅災邪拔命保護章), which was used for cases of chronic disease (*gubing* 痼病). In practice, the petitioning diocesan libationer submits his petition to specific heavenly officials and seeks a remedy for the patient by reciting the following:

> I summon the Yin and Yang merit officers of healing and the Physician of the Five Organs to the great Palace of the Phoenix in the sun and moon and beg for the divine drugs of the five colors of Great Purity. After injection, the drugs will circulate within the hundred veins, abdomen, and chest, and as a result the chronic disease will be expelled and cured.
> 謹請陰陽治病功曹, 五官醫吏, 詣鳳凰太宮日月之中, 請取太清五色神藥, 灌注口中, 流布百脈, 腹內胸膈之中, 痼疾皆能消愈。[50]

A second pertinent example that shows the concern among Heavenly Master adepts with committing sin involves Wang Xianzhi, who once fell ill, and his family decided to carry out the ritual of petitioning on his behalf. The invited Daoist Master asked him a number of questions so as to exact a confession of sins. Wang Xianzhi answered, "There is nothing sinful I can think of in particular, except maybe the fact that I divorced my wife."[51] Whether or not that was in fact the cause of his illness, the point remains that healing requires the sick man to examine his behavior from the early stages of life to the time of the illness.

There is no doubt that the main purpose of presenting a petition was to cleanse oneself of misfortune and heal disease, but the underlying belief system that informs the petitioning ritual is predominantly built upon the earlier Heavenly Master ritual of the submission of Personal Writs to the Three Officials, in which adepts had first to confess their sins (*shouguo*) and then beg the heavenly officials for absolution (*jiezui*). The *Book of the Hymnal Rules of Lord Lao* states: "If one's confession of misdeeds is incomprehensive, insincere, and has no faith in the code of rules, then what can the presentation of the petition disperse?"[52] In petitioning the heavenly officials to descend to heal sickness, proper confession of sin is paramount, otherwise the sick person would not be forgiven and the illness could not be cured. The *Xuandu lüwen* also confirms the direct relationship between repentance and healing: "The rules of the code state that if a patient reflects on the sin and evil that caused his illness, then the deities and Lords who are in charge of examining misdeeds and discharging evil will definitely discharge all the sins and evil that were committed on earth, and, in consequence, the patient's illness will be cleansed and eliminated."[53]

The idea that disease and misfortune were caused by the accumulation of sins committed by the living or the dead may have deep roots in the Chinese tradition. The idea that sins would be judged by a heavenly administration and judiciary was also a part of the religious world of the Han period.[54] Yet, this does not mean that early Heavenly Master Daoism has nothing new to offer. The new religious Daoist movement provided a method of healing by means of confession and petition. The basic premise that sin attracts divine retribution in the form of illness and other afflictions does inform early Heavenly Master teachings, but it is able to provide a full soteriological program through the ritual of confession, repentance, and supplication that promises absolution and redemption. In this light, we can better understand why Lu Xiujing 陸修靜 (406–477) emphasizes the confession of sin in his *Master Lu's Summary of Daoist Liturgy* 陸先生道門科略. He writes, "Patients . . . were only to ingest talismans, drink water, and confess

all their sins from their first year of life. Even all those who should be punished to death because of their capital crimes will be pardoned, and those whose illnesses have accumulated and who are distressed by prolonged diseases will all be healed" (若疾病之人 . . . 惟服符飲水及首生年以來所犯罪過。罪應死者皆為原赦，積疾困病，莫不生全).[55] Likewise, the fifth-century Heavenly Master scripture, *Santian neijie jing* 三天內解經 (Explanations of the Essentials of the Three Heavens), highlights the direct connection between the confession of sin and healing: "Those afflicted with illness who are above the age of seven—that is, the age of cognition—should personally seek forgiveness for their sins and misdeeds" (疾病者，但令從年七歲有識以來，首謝所犯罪過).[56] The foundation of this mature Six Dynasties doctrine, I suggest, can be traced to the earliest Heavenly Masters community in the second century, particularly to the ritual tradition of the Personal Writs to the Three Officials.

While it is obvious that there is a strong connection between morality and illness, and between confession and absolution, why must Heavenly Master adepts personally write the writs to the Three Officials? What is the exact nature of the Heavenly Master belief in the Three Officials of Heaven, Earth, and Water? There is little historical evidence about the origin of the belief in the Three Officials, save that it was connected with the early Heavenly Master tradition under Zhang Lu. As Ōfuchi Ninji points out, there is no official historical record that mentions the practice of sacrificial offerings to the Three Officials before the emergence of the early Heavenly Master movement.[57] The Three Officials do not appear in the apocryphal texts of the Han period, the *Taiping jing*, or in the tomb-quelling texts. Rao Zongyi is of the opinion that the notion of the Three Officials may be implied in the expression "heaven and earth have officials" (天地有官) that appears in the "Zaiyou" 在宥 chapter of the *Zhuangzi* 莊子.[58] For Rao, the reason why water is designated a heavenly official of equal rank to the officials of heaven and earth is due to the belief that "water is conceived as the root and origin of the universe by the Daoist School."[59] The Qing dynasty scholar Zhao Yi remarks that "the proper title of the Three Officials of Heaven, Earth, and Water began with the Way of the Five Pecks of Rice (*Wudoumi dao* 五斗米道) of the Three Zhangs [i.e., Zhang Daoling, Zhang Heng 張衡, and Zhang Lu]." Moreover, he observes, "Although Zhang Heng and his followers were the first to adopt the title of *sanguan* (Three Officials), they had not yet introduced the notion of *sanyuan* (Three Principles)."[60] However, given the lack of concrete evidence, it is difficult to conclude that the belief in the Three Officials really began with Zhang Heng or Zhang Lu.[61]

The notion of the Three Officials derives from the cosmological framework of Heavenly Master Daoism, whose doctrine of the "Higher Three Heavens" (*shang santian* 上三天) challenges the then prevalent doctrine of the "Six Heavens" (*liutian* 六天). As Kristofer Schipper makes clear, "One of the cornerstones of the Tianshi dao is the rejection of the worship of the Six Heavens, a term that, in Han Confucianism, denoted the pantheon of saints and gods of the state religion."[62] The *Santian neijie jing* offers the following criticism of the "Six Heavens":

> The Three Ways became intermingled. As a result, people became disorderly, mingling promiscuously with outsiders, and each person had his or her own particular object of veneration. Some placed their faith in the deviant and discarded the True; others offered supplication to demonic spirits. When human worship is excessive and misguided here below, the pneumas (*qi*) of heaven flare up and become disorderly above. This causes the *qi* of heaven to become turbid and the people to lose their original perfection.
> 三道交錯，於是人民雜亂，中外相混，各有攸尚。或信邪廢真，禱祠鬼神。人事越錯於下，天氣勃亂在上，致天氣混濁，人民失其本真。[63]

The Heavenly Master community was established on the basis of a new covenant and was created to replace the disorderly cosmological age of the Six Heavens. A "Correct Law of the Three Heavens" (*santian zhengfa* 三天正法) was entrusted to this new Daoist community. Guided by the correct law, the early Heavenly Masters began a war against popular religion that was to continue throughout the history of Daoism. This new religion rejected the practice of sacrifice to demons or spirits belonging to other groups (不妄淫祀他鬼神) and focused devotion exclusively on the deities of the Higher Three Heavens.[64] The *Santian neijie jing* mentions that Zhang Daoling was told to go to the Han court to make a covenant with the Han emperor and his officials before the "Three Officials of Heaven, Earth, and Water," in which it would be avowed that the Han people would live by the "Correct Law of the Three Heavens."

The *Dadao jialing jie* explains that the universe was created when the Great Dao bestowed the Three *qi* or *pneumata* (*sanqi* 三氣)—the Mysterious (*xuan* 玄), the Primal (*yuan* 元), and the Incipient (*shi* 始)—from the Higher Three Heavens. These primordial energies were represented by the colors azure, white, and yellow, respectively and became the triad of Heaven, Earth, and the Dao as the Original Being. The scripture further relates, "The azure mysterious [*qi*] formed Heaven. The yellow incipient [*qi*] formed Earth. The white primal [*qi*] formed the Dao [as the Original Being]" (玄青為天，始黃為地，元白為

道也).[65] In early Chinese tradition, the color white was often associated with water.[66] Viewed within this cosmological framework, the three *qi* of the Higher Three Heavens can be seen as the origins of the threefold structure of heaven, earth, and water. Likewise, the Three Officials of Heaven, Earth, and Water derive from the three *qi* of the Mysterious, the Primal, and the Incipient.[67] In other words, the Three Officials are emanations of the *qi* of the Dao (道氣). The rite of the Personal Writs to the Three Officials should be understood in this context.

The Three Officials examine, judge, summon, punish, and reward human behavior in different realms.[68] The Official of Heaven (*tianguan* 天官) bestows prosperity on the human world. The Official of Earth (*diguan* 地官) examines the deeds of the dead and their unconfessed and unexpiated sins. The Official of Water (*shuiguan* 水官) oversees disasters connected with misdeeds that are committed in water.[69] The *Xiang'er Commentary* states: "The profane are unable to accumulate good deeds, so when they die it is a true death. They are taken away in servitude under the Official of Earth" (死便真死, 屬地官去也).[70] The teaching of the Heavenly Master in the *Zhengyi fawen tianshi jiaojie kejing* also claims that "a life that cannot be redeemed is taken away in servitude of the Official of Earth (命不可贖屬地官), and in the underworld of the Yellow Springs (*huangquan* 黃泉) he joins the legion of ghosts (*guiwu* 鬼伍)."[71] According to these early texts of Heavenly Master Daoism, the Official of Earth is responsible for punishing the dead in the netherworld.

All of the Six Dynasties Daoist scriptures uniformly expound the Three Officials as the deities who are in charge of inquisition, judgment, and punishment of the transgressions of the living and the dead. The sentences handed out by the Three Officials are very heavy when believers transgress the prohibitions (*jin* 禁), precepts (*jie* 戒), and statutes (*lü* 律) of the Dao in the Heavenly Master community.[72] The following examples should provide a glimpse of the work of the Three Officials:

1. [When people are] banished and eliminated by the Three Officials, they immediately die and are immersed in the Yellow Springs. They cannot pass through the earth, and their bones and flesh are corrupted and rot. Meanwhile, their *hun* and *po* spirits will be handed to the Three Officials for indictment and punishment. The pain of this experience is indescribable.
   三官驅除, 死沒黃泉, 不得過土戶, 骨肉減腐, 魂魄付三官拷楚, 荼毒難言。[73]
2. The Heavenly codes are very strict. Those who are sentenced by the Three Officials will pass their indictment to nine generations of

descendants and are demoted to be lower demons forever. Should one not therefore be cautious [of inviting] such consequences?
天科嚴峻, 犯者獲罪於三官, 殃延九祖, 永為下鬼, 可不慎之?[74]

3. Those who commit sins will be summoned and indicted by the Three Officials and turned into ghosts.
若犯天地水三官殃考, 應還鬼伍者。[75]
4. Those who want to be healed should petition the Three Officials of Heaven, Earth, and Water.
若治病疫氣, 皆宜自啟天地水三官。[76]
5. On the days of the Three Assemblies, the Three Officials and myriad deities will descend and examine all of the records.
三會之日, 三官萬神更相揀當。[77]
6. All fugitive and disobedient people will have their reckoning (*suan*) shortened and their names excised from the records by the Department of Heaven. The Three Officials will send out the Lords and Clerks of Summoning of Inquisition to secretly keep watch on their households, afflict their members with inquisitorial punishments, and call disasters down upon them. If their sins are heavy, then they will meet with the Six Calamities; if their sins are light, then the Five Disasters will descend upon them. Thus, they will be made to suffer death, imprisonment, floods, fire, thieves, and bandits.
凡逋違之民, 天曹奪算削籍, 三官遣考, 召君吏潛守門戶, 考逮人口, 令招災害。罪重遭六害, 輕罪被五災, 故令死喪疾病, 官府牢獄, 水火盜賊。[78]

In summary, the belief system of the Three Officials contains the following features. First, the Three Officials check on the good and evil deeds of the living and the dead; second, the punishment of sin by the Three Officials results in illness, suffering, death, the "Six Calamities" or the "Five Disasters"; and third, conviction and punishment can be extended to nine generations of one's descendants. Therefore, the *Dengzhen yinjue* stresses that "inquisition by the Three Officials should not be taken lightly" (三官考察, 非小事也).[79]

There is certainly a legal sense to the doctrine of the Three Officials. To quote Strickmann, "The public confession of sins has in itself a legal resonance."[80] However, more importantly, there is an additional soteriological dimension to the ritual of Personal Writs to the Three Officials in Heavenly Master Daoism. The *Dengzhen yinjue*, citing the "old rites of the Heavenly Masters," details the ritual of entering the diocese (*ruzhi* 入治), audience at the oratory (*chaojing* 朝靜), and petitioning the Officials for healing (請官治病).[81] There is no doubt that

this was built on the theology of the Three Officials. In this ritual, the petitioning priest or libationer first entered the incense-filled oratory, visualizing the sacred audience and uttering incantations addressed to the four directions of space. When addressing the North, the petitioning priest knocked his head on the ground twice while facing north, slapped his face three times (*bojia* 搏頰), and chanted the following:

> I respectfully supplicate to the Sovereign Most High of the Lord of the Great Dao in the Upper North that your servant X was a man of flesh born from a womb and descended from mortals. May I be released from thousands of sins and transgressions transmitted to me from seven generations of my ancestors and the inquisitions and punishment of the Three Officials. May [the Lord] cause the blessing to grow in the five directions and eliminate the Nine Realms of Darkness.
> 謹關啟上皇太上北上大道君，某以胎生肉人，枯骨子孫，願得涂七世以來下及某身千罪萬過，陰伏匿惡，考犯三官者，皆令消解，當令福生五方，滅滅九陰。[82]

Next, the priest turned to the east, knocked his head on the ground twice, slapped himself three times, and recited the following:

> I respectfully supplicate to the Illimitable Great Dao of Highest Clarity of the Mysterious and Primal [pneumas] and the Highest Three Heavens, the Most High Lord Lao, the Most High Elders, the Lord of the Heavens, the Elders of the Heavens, the Nine Ancients Lords of the Immortal Courts, the Elders of the Nine Pneumas, a billion pneumas of the Dao, twelve hundred official lords, and all below the Jade Throne of the Highest Clarity, to release me…from the disasters caused by quarrels, hundreds and thousands of disasters and diseases. May all of them disappear and be eliminated from the records of the Three Officials. [I desire] that the Elders of the Three Heavens grant me mercy.
> 謹關啟太清玄元無上三天無極大道、太上老君、太上丈人、天帝君、天帝丈人、九老仙都君、九氣丈人、百千萬重道氣、千二百官君、太清玉陛下，當令某 … 口舌惡禍，千殃萬患，一時滅絕，記在三官，被受三天丈人之恩。[83]

We can see from this illustration that when officiating priests entered the altar area in the oratory to present the petitions of their clients, whether the petition was for healing or mercy, they first had to beg the Three Officials for the forgiveness of the sins of their clients and the removal

from the "Register of Death" (*siji* 死籍) of the details of these sins and crimes. Having thus assured a favorable outcome for their clients, the Daoist priests could then invite the Heavenly Officials to descend and resolve the issue of the petition at hand, based on the Heavenly Master's manual of the "Protocol of the Twelve Hundred Officials."[84]

That the Three Officials have the power to forgive and heal is clear; but why should the Three Officials absolve the accumulated sins of the petitioners? In asking the Three Officials for forgiveness, the petitioner has to make a full record of his/her sins and evil deeds, which the *Dianlüe*, as cited earlier, refers to as "a statement of confession of sins." A unique testimony of the practice of writing out a full confession of one's sins to obtain forgiveness from the Three Officials is given in a sample of *zhang*-petition called "The Daoist Master's Personal Writs Petition to the Three Officials of Heaven, Earth, and Water [Containing] a Record [of Sins Committed by the Supplicants]" (道士天地水三官手書籙狀章), which is found in a Tang collection of *zhang*-petitions complied by Du Guangting 杜光庭 (850–933), called the *Most High Memorials That Proclaim Mercy and Are Helpful in Working Wonders* (*Taishang xuanci zhuhua zhang* 太上宣慈助化章). According to this text, the client "had to establish a record (*luzhuang* 錄狀) of all his or her transgressions since the age of seven *sui*, itemizing them one by one, giving full details of places and dates, avoiding any circumlocutions or flowery paraphrases, and presenting everything in a straightforward manner, as in an official document."[85] The actual text reads as follows:

> [In the *zhang*-petition], it was written that X, male or female, coming from so-and-so village, county and province, had an age of Y, and respectfully wrote the handwritten document, in which he gave a personal record of all his sins. This record was like the official record of *buzhang*, in that it itemized them [sins] one by one, avoiding any circumlocutions or flowery paraphrases, without hiding severe sins and declaring only slight ones. If one's confession was not comprehensive, then the Summoning Officials would not absolve the indictment. When presenting each sin, one wrote that in year Z, X committed evil…[and] violated the rules. As a result, in month Z and day Z, X was sick and afflicted with disaster, and that X's disease had not been cured since then. X was worried that X would not survive. Here is respectfully written the confession of X, and it is established that the record is right.
> 上言某郡縣鄉里男女生某甲，年如干歲，謹條手書，首罪簿狀。如左簿狀之法，一事一條，不得華辭文過，藏重出輕。若首而不盡，考官

不解。一事以上, 甲年如干時所犯罪過 ... 某奉法違科, 以某月某日卒得疾病苦厄, 是云云. 至今不差, 恐不生活. 謹操手書錄狀。[86]

Besides this text, the *Master Lu's Summary of Taoist Liturgy* and the *Santian neijie jing* state the same rule that the sick person has to "confess all his sins from the first year of life" and that "those afflicted with illness who are above the age of seven...are to personally seek forgiveness for their sins."[87] I am unable to say whether the "Daoist Master's Personal Writs Petition to the Three Officials of Heaven, Earth, and Water [Containing] a Record [of Sins committed by the Supplicants]" was the same as the "Personal Writs to the Three Officials" (三官手書), but the underlying idea is clearly the same.

In addition to being a ritual of repentance, the tradition of offering Personal Writs to the Three Officials also indicates the creation of a covenantal relationship between the adepts and the deities.[88] In the Han period, the term *shoushu* 手書 (personal writ) referred to a kind of official document for the purpose of building a contract or filing a record that had to be personally written.[89] According to Ōfuchi Ninji, the filing of property tax and income tax was mandatory under the Han legal system, and the head of every household had to file such returns in the form of personal records. For instance, on a passage in the *Han shu* 漢書 (History of Former Han), Yan Shigu 顏師古 (581–645) comments, "The law stipulates that those who have rental income should report it [to the government], and the heads of households must report it in the form of a personal record. If the heads of households do not honestly give their personal records, they will be given a penalty of two units [*jin*] of gold."[90] The personal record of sins that was given to the Three Officials in early Heavenly Master Daoism must have followed the statutory filing requirements of the Han dynasty. The Personal Writ to the Three Officials requires that adepts give full details of all their sins to the Three Officials and, at the same time, emphasizes that the adepts enter into a contract with the Three Officials not to commit misdeeds again. According to *Master Lu's Summary of Taoist Liturgy,* if the people "spit out their sins and take an oath with the Three Officials, then once they confirm this credential, they will be saved following the sequence prescribed by the codes" (吐罪投誓三官, 晝一為信, 然後依科次第拯救).[91] The notion of "taking an oath with the Three Officials" is reminiscent of making a covenant with the Three Officials of Heaven, Earth and Water by placing the three sets of one's personal record of sin on a mountain, in the earth, and in the water. This covenant is also emphasized in the "Biography of Zhang Daoling" in the *Shenxian*

zhuan 神仙傳 (Traditions of Divine Transcendents), which explicitly refers to the Personal Writs to the Three Officials:

> [Zhang (Dao) Ling] did not want [to rule the people by] using punishments. So, once he had set up administrative rules, whenever people became ill he had them compose an account of all the infractions they had committed since their birth; then they were to cast the personal record of their sins into the water, thereby establishing a covenant with the gods that they would not violate the regulations again, pledging their own death as surety. Because of this practice, the common people were extremely mindful. When they happened to become ill, they always confessed their transgressions, [thinking that] if there was only one, they might obtain a recovery, and that if there were [as many as] two they would be mortified. Thus, they did not dare to commit serious infractions but reformed themselves out of awe for Heaven and Earth.
> [張道陵] 不喜施刑罰, 乃立條制, 使有疾病者, 皆疏記生身已來所犯之臬, 乃手書投水中, 與神明共盟約, 不得復犯法, 當以身死為約。於是百姓計念, 邂逅疾病, 輒當首過, 一則得愈, 二則羞慚, 不敢重犯, 且畏天地而改。[92]

The early Heavenly Master community was founded on the basis of a covenant between the divine Laozi and his vicar on earth, Zhang Daoling. This is central to the Heavenly Masters identity and is present in all of its scriptures. The *Master Lu's Summary of Taoist Liturgy* defines Heavenly Master Daoism as the "Teaching of the Pure Bond of the Covenant One with the Powers" (正一盟威清約之教).[93] One of the main requirements of this covenant was that adepts, when they fell ill, had to renew their covenant with the Three Officials of Heaven, Earth, and Water by confessing all of their sins and evil deeds in Personal Writs. If the adepts breached the covenant and transgressed the codes and laws again, they had to face the punishments that were stipulated in the covenant. The "Daoist Master's Personal Writs Petition to the Three Officials of Heaven, Earth, and Water [Containing] a Record [of Sins Committed by the Supplicants]" describes explicitly that once the covenant with the Three Officials was violated, "one has to submit his body and life to the [indictment of the] Three Officials of the Heaven, Earth, and Water. He dare not show any regret [for his earlier commitment]" (以身口數, 謝天地水三官, 不敢自怨).[94]

It is clear that early Heavenly Master Daoism put much emphasis on the idea of a covenant between adepts and the Three Officials. The

Santian neijie jing, for example, states, "This covenant was made by the two [Zhang Daoling and the Han Emperor] together before the Three Officials of Heaven, Earth, and Water and before the Generals of the Year Star. Both vowed that they would employ the correct law of the Three Heavens."[95] The *Taizhen ke* 太真科 code of the early Southern Dynasties says, "The Most High told the Heavenly Master Zhang Daoling that 'Established upon the inner and outer codes tallies, you should reach a covenant with the Three Officials of Heaven, Earth, and Water by breaking a stone and taking elixirs as a [token of an] oath."[96] Zhang Wanfu 張萬福 (fl. 711–713), a famous Daoist Master of the Tang dynasty, defines the term *mengshi* 盟誓 (oath and covenant) in the following way: "*Meng* 盟 is glossed as *ming* 明 (to make it known). If the two persons do not yet trust each other, then they will seek to know each other by making a covenant with the gods. The gods are formless, intangible, and indescribable. If one breaches the covenant [with the gods], then one will surely bring oneself indictment and disaster, which are signs showing the efficacy of the covenant."[97] According to Zhang Wanfu's explanation, then, when the adepts of the early Heavenly Master community violated the covenant with the Three Officials, they were certain to bring upon themselves indictment, punishment, and disaster.

Conclusion

Many of the ideas and religious practices of early Heavenly Master Daoism were not its own invention, but agreed largely with popular beliefs of the Han period, as reflected in the apocryphal texts, funerary texts, and also the *Taiping jing*. In the Han religious world, illness, misfortune, and death were seen as punishment for one's sins by divine officials. This notion was not restricted to the living: punishment for the sins of the dead could also be transmitted to their descendants, afflicting them with suffering and disease, because a detailed record of one's misdeeds was kept and judged by the Heavenly administration. Although the Way of the Heavenly Master subscribed to these basic ideas, it introduced new elements that transformed existing religious beliefs and practices into a comprehensive soteriological enterprise. Among the many distinctive features of Heavenly Master Daoism, the belief in the Three Officials of Heaven, Earth, and Water is perhaps the most important, and should be seen as a core feature that integrates the ideas of morality, judgment, illness, law, precepts, and salvation into an organic whole. The biography of Zhang Lu in the *Dianlüe* represents the earliest extant historical evidence of the Heavenly Master ritual of presenting

a handwritten petition to the Three Officials. Although similar ideas of divine judgment can be seen in the *Taiping jing* and other Han mortuary texts, the belief in the Three Officials and the ritual of sending written petitions to them were unique to the Way of the Heavenly Master. There is ample evidence that the belief in the Three Officials of Heaven, Earth, and Water was critical to the formation of Heavenly Master Daoism and that it was always taught among the adepts of the Heavenly Master community.

Notes

1. Michel Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 4.
2. See *Sanguo zhi* (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1959), 8.264.
3. See Ōfuchi Ninji 大淵忍爾, *Shoki no dōkyō* 初期の道教 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1991), 151–56, and Zhang Zehong 張澤洪, "Zaoqi Zhengyidao de shangzhang jidu sixiang" 早期正一道的上章濟度思想, *Zongjiaoxue yanjiu* 宗教學研究 47 (2000): 22–24.
4. For example, Kobayashi Masayoshi 小林正美 states, "The Heavenly Master had ceased to address petitions to the Three Bureaus and instead worshipped the 1,200 Heavenly officials." See Kobayashi, "The Heavenly Masters under the Eastern Jin and Liu-Song Dynasties," *Taoist Resources* 3, no. 2 (1992), 22. See also his *Rikuchō dōkyōshi kenkyū* 六朝道教史研究 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1990), 194–95; and Ōfuchi Ninji, *Shoki no dōkyō*, 154–55.
5. To the author's knowledge, Miyakawa Hisayuki's "Tenchi mizu sankan to dōten" 天地水三官と洞天, *Tōhō shōkyū* 東方宗教 78 (1991): 1–22 is the only study on the origin of the belief in the Three Officials, although the Qing scholar Zhao Yi 趙翼 (1727–1814) in his *Gaiyu congkao* 陔餘叢考 (Shanghai: Shangwu, 1957), 749–50, mentions "the Three Officials of Heaven, Earth and Water."
6. On the confession of sin in early Heavenly Master Daoism, see Tsuchiya Masaaki 土屋昌明, "Gokan ni okeru shiko to shuko ni tsuite" 後漢における思過と首過について, in *Dōkyō bunka e no tenbō* 道教文化への展望, ed. the Dōkyō Bunka Kenkyūkai (Tokyo: Hirakawa shuppansha, 1994), 271–93; Tsuchiya Masaakai, "Confession of Sins and Awareness of Self in the *Taiping jing*," in Livia Kohn and Harold D. Roth, eds., *Daoist Identity: History, Lineage, and Ritual* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), 39–57. See also Yoshikawa Tadao 吉川忠夫, "Chūgoku rikuchō jidai ni okeru shūkyō no montei" 中國六朝時代における宗教の問題, *Shisō* (1994.4): 99–118.
7. See Akizuki Kan'ei 秋月觀暎, "Sangen shisō no keisei ni tsuite" 三元思想の形成について, *Tōhōgaku* 東方學 22 (1961): 27–41 and Ōfuchi Ninji,

"Dōkyō sangen setsu no seisei to tenkai" 道教三元說の生成と展開, *Tōhō shūkyō* 65 (1985): 1–22.

8. See Wang Chengwen 王承文, *Dunhuang gu Lingbaojing yu Jin Tang daojiao* 敦煌古靈寶經與晉唐道教 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2002), 516–46.
9. See Li Fengmao 李豐楙, "Yansu yu youxi: Daojiao sanyuanzhai yu Tangdai jiesu" 嚴肅與遊戲: 道教三元齋與唐代節俗, in *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan zhongguo wenzhe yanjiusuo shizhounian jinian lunwenji* (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan zhongguo wenzhe yanjiusuo, 1999), 53–110. Li Fengmao states: "The rites of confessing misdeeds based upon the Handwritten Documents to the Three Officials were very popular in the late Han period and had been developed into rites of Sanyuan for absolving sins with textual scriptures and rites of fasting" (69).
10. On the legend of Zhang Daoling, see Franciscus Verellen, "Zhang Ling yu lingjing zhi chuanshuo" 張陵與陵井之傳說, in *Daojia wenhua yanjiu* 道家文化研究, vol. 16 (Beijing: Sanlian, 1999), 217–40; Liu Cunren 柳存仁, "Luan Ba yu Zhang Tianshi" 欒巴與張天師, in Li Fengmao and Zhu Ronggui, eds., *Yishi, miaohui yu shequ—Daojiao, minjian xinyang yu minjian wenhua* 儀式、廟會與社區—道教、民間信仰與民間文化 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan zhongguo wenzhe yanjiusuo, 1996), 19–48.
11. See *Dadao jialing jie* 大道家令戒, 3b and *Santian neijie jing* 三天內解經, 1.5b–6a; in *Daozang* 道藏 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1994), vol. 18, 236, and vol. 28, 414 respectively. Two recent studies that focus on the sociological organization and liturgical agenda of early Heavenly Master Daoism are Franciscus Verellen, "The Twenty-four Dioceses and Zhang Daoling: The Spatio-Liturgical Organization of Early Heavenly Master Taoism," in Phyllis Granoff and Koichi Shinohara, eds., *Pilgrims, Patrons, and Place: Localizing Sanctity in Asian Religions* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2003), 1–67; and Verellen, "The Heavenly Master Liturgical Agenda According to *Chisong Zi's Petition Almanac*," *Cahiers d'Extreme-Asie* 14 (2004): 291–343.
12. See Jack Dull, "Shin dōkyō ni okeru jukyō no sho yōso" 新道教における儒教の諸要素, translated by Fukui Fumimasa, in Sakai Tadao 酒井忠夫, ed., *Dōkyō no sōgōteki kenkyū* 道教の總合的研究 (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1972), 7–56.
13. On the idea of "seed people" in Heavenly Master Daoism, see Yoshioka Yoshitoyo 吉岡義豐, *Dōkyō to bukkyō* 道教と佛教, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1976), 257–83; Li Fengmao, "Liuchao Daojiao de dujiu guan" 六朝道教的度救觀, *Dongfang zongjiao yanjiu* 東方宗教研究 5 (1995): 138–160.
14. In the *Zhengtong Daozang* 正統道藏, the Commands and Admonitions of the Families of the Great Dao are given on page 18 in the *Zhengyi fawen tianshi jiaojie kejing*; see *Daozang*, vol. 18, 237. The translation is from Stephen Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 181.

15. See *Sanguo zhi* 8.263–65.
16. *Xuandu lüwen* 玄都律文, 8a, in *Daozang*, vol. 3, 458.
17. Franciscus Verellen, "The Heavenly Master Liturgical Agenda According to *Chisong Zi's Petition Almanac*," 301.
18. See David N. Keightley, "The Religious Commitments: Shang Theology and the Genesis of Chinese Political Culture," *History of Religions* 17 (1978), 214–16.
19. See *Nüqing guilü* 女青鬼律, 3.1a. Cf. Chi-tim Lai, "*The Demon Statutes of Nüqing* and the Problem of Bureaucratization of the Netherworld in Early Heavenly Master Daoism," *T'oung Pao* 88 (2003): 251–81.
20. *Zhengyi fawen tianshi jiaojie kejing*, 4a, *Daozang*, vol. 18, 233; also see *Chisongzi Zhangli* 赤松子章曆 (Petition Almanacs of the Red Pine Master), vol. 2, 31b, in *Daozang*, vol. 11, 191, which says, "Slight misconduct will be restricted within the self; severe evil will afflict descendants" (小過止其身, 大過下流子孫).
21. For the relationship between *Taiping jing* and early Heavenly Master Daoism, see K. Schipper and F. Verellen, eds., *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 277–80.
22. The bamboo scripts that were excavated from the tombs in Fangma Tan in Gansu province in 1986, which date to 297 BCE, mention that there was an official called the Official of Allotted Lifespans (Siming shi 司命史) in the netherworld. See Li Xueqin 李學勤, "Fangma Tan jian zhong de zhiguai gushi" 放馬灘簡中的志怪故事, in *Wenwu* 1990.4: 43–47.
23. For instance, *Yixin fang* 醫心方, vol. 26 cites the *Hetu jiming shu* 河圖紀命書, which states: "there are deities controlling people's misconduct who shorten their lifetime based upon the severity of what they have committed.... The shortening of one's lifespan corresponds with one's misconduct" (天地有司過之神, 隨人所犯輕重以奪其算紀 .... 隨所犯輕重, 所奪有多少也). On the relation between Han apocrypha and Daoism, see Anna Seidel, "Imperial Treasures and Daoist Sacraments: Daoist Roots in the Apocrypha," in *Tantric and Daoist Studies in Honor of R. A. Stein*, vol. 2, ed. Michel Strickmann (Brussels: Institut Belge des Hautes Etudes Chinioses, 1983), and Xiao Dengfu 蕭登福, *Chenwei yu Daojiao* 讖緯與道教 (Taipei: Wenjin, 2000).
24. See Yu Liming 俞理明, *Taiping jing zhengdu* 太平經正讀 (Chengdu: Ba Shu, 2001), 390.
25. See Rao Zongyi, *Laozi Xiang'er zhu jiaozheng* 老子想爾注校證 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1991), 38.
26. The Han lexicon *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 defines the word *zhe* 謫 as "punishment" (*fa* 罰). See Xu Shen 許慎 (ca. 55–149), *Shuowen jiezi* (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2002), 56.
27. *Taiping jing*, *juan* 112, in Wang Ming 王明 ed., *Taiping jing hejiao* 太平經合校 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1960), 579.

28. On the idea of inherited guilt, see Kamitsuka Yoshiko 神塚淑子, "Taihei kin no shōfu to Taihei no riron ni tsuite" 太平經の承負と太平の理論について, *Nagoya daigaku kyōyōbu kiyō* A 32 (1988): 41–75; Barbara Hendrischke, "The Concept of Inherited Evil in the *Taiping jing*," *East Asian History* 2 (1991): 1–29. Also see Yuet-Keung Lo's discussion of *chengfu* in this volume.
29. *Taiping jing*, *juan* 112, in Wang Ming ed., *Taiping jing hejiao*, 579. On the idea of disease in the *Taiping jing*, see Lin Fushi 林富士, "Shilun *Taipingjing* de jibing guannian" 試論《太平經》的疾病觀念, in *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊, vol. 62 (1993): 225–63; see also Lin's "Shilun zhongguo zaoqi daojiao duiyu yiyao de taidu" 試論中國早期道教對於醫藥的態度, *Taiwan zongjiao yanjiu* 台灣宗教研究, 1, no. 1 (2000): 107–42.
30. *Taiping jing*, *juan* 37, *Taiping jing hejiao*, 57, mentions: "[The Heavenly] Master absolves the animosity of inherited guilt liability for heaven; the disaster of inherited guilt liability for earth; the misfortune of inherited guilt liability for the emperor; the fault of inherited guilt liability for the people; the indictment of inherited guilt liability for all kinds of things."
31. On the mortuary texts, see Ikeda On, "Chōgoku rekidai hakaken kōryaku" 中國歷代墓卷略考, *Tōyō bunka kenkyūjo kiyō* 東洋文化研究所紀要 86.1 (1981): 113–279; Anna Seidel, "Traces of Han Religion in Funeral Texts in Tombs," in Akizuki Kan'ei, ed., *Dōkyō to shokyo bunka* 道教と宗教文化 (Tokyo: Heika shuppansha, 1987), 21–57.
32. See Wu Rongzeng 吳榮曾, "Zhenmuwen zhong suojian de Donghan dao wu guanxi" 鎮墓文中所見到的東漢道巫關係, *Wenwu* 1981.3: 57; Ikeda On, "Chūgoku rekidai hakaken kōryaku" cites a tomb-quelling text from the tomb-quelling bottle of the Yang family in Hongnong, which reads "The Messenger of the Heavenly Emperor hereby reverently establishes safety and security for the tombs of the Yang family. It is reverently done, using human figures made of lead and gold and jade, to disperse the culpability for the dead, and eliminate the sins and crimes of the living. After this bottle reaches the tomb, it is decreed that the people will be relieved. The leader of the family should enjoy his rent-income, which amounts to twenty million per year. It is decreed that generations of sons and grandsons shall serve in offices and be promoted to the ranks of Duke and Marquis, with fortune and prestige as marshals and ministers without end. [This decree] is to be dispatched to the Minister of the Grave Mound and the Governor of the Grave, to be employed accordingly, as decreed by the statutes and ordinances."
33. See Rao Zongyi, "Dunhuang chutu zhengmuwen suojian jiechu guanyu kaoshi 敦煌出土鎮墓文所見解除慣語考釋," *Dunhuang tulufan yanjiu* 敦煌吐魯番研究 3 (1998): 17. Rao further opines that this kind of art comes from the "schools of change and return" (*bianfu zhi jia* 變復之家). On the

arts of dispersal and elimination in the Han period, see Wang Chong 王充, *Lunheng* 論衡 25, "Scripts of Dispersal" (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1982), 1041–46.

34. Michel Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine*, 25 and Franciscus Verellen, "The Heavenly Master Liturgical Agenda According to *Chisong Zi's Petition Almanac*," 304–305.
35. See Rao Zongyi, "Dunhuang chutu zhengmuwen suojian jiechu guanyu kaoshi," 14.
36. Poo Mu-chou, *In Search of Personal Welfare: A View of Ancient Chinese Religion* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 170–77.
37. Ibid., 14.
38. See Michel Strickmann, "Disease and Daoist Law," in Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine*, ed. Bernard Faure (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 1–57.
39. See *Dengzhen yinjue*, 3.5a–30a, *Daozang*, vol. 6, 618–26. On the rites for entering the "quiet chamber" (*jingshi* 靜室), inviting officials, and healing disease in Heavenly Master Daoism in the Hanzhong area, see Angelika Cedzich, "Das Ritual der Himmelsmeister im Spiegel further Quellen," PhD dissertation (Wurburg, 1987), 61–105; also see Ōfuchi Ninji, *Dōkyō no kinten* 道教の經典 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1997), 427–72; Kobayashi Masayoshi, *Rikuchō dōkyōshi kenkyū*, 389–402; and Wang Zongyu, "Toshin inketsu ni mieru tenshido" 登真隱訣にみえる天師道, translated by Tsuchiya Masaki, *Tōhō shūkyō* 96 (2000): 19–37.
40. See *Dengzhen yinjue*, 3.15a, 21a, 23b.
41. See *Laojun yinsong jiejing*, 21b, in *Daozang*, vol. 18, 542.
42. See *Chisongzi zhangli*, 4.17a-b, in *Daozang*, vol.11, 208.
43. There is some debate on the dates of Wang Xizhi. Some modern writers use the dates 307–365. For the dates of Wang Xizhi, see also chapter 10, n. 46 in this volume.
44. For the study of Wang Xizhi's "Guannu ti" and its relationship with Daoism, see Yoshikawa Tadao, *Sho to dōkyō no shūhen* 書と道教の周邊 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1987) and Lothar Ledderose, "Some Taoist Elements in the Calligraphy of the Six Dynasties," *T'oung Pao* 70 (1984): 246–78.
45. See Yoshikawa Tadao, *Chūgokujin no shūkyō ishiki* 中國人の宗教意識 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1998), 94–97 and Fukunaga Mitsuji 福永光司, *Dōkyō shisōshi kenkyū* 道教思想史研究 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1987), 319–55.
46. For a study of Xu Mai, see Yoshikawa Tadao ed., *Rikuchō dōkyō no kenkyū* 六朝道教の研究 (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1998), 3–22.
47. See Yoshikawa Tadao, *Chūgokujin no shūkyō ishiki*, 99.
48. See *Fashu yaolu* 法書要錄, *juan* 3, in *Xuejin daoyuan* 學津討原, vol. 11.
49. See *Xuandu lüwen*, 16b, in *Daozang*, vol.3, 462: "Lu says those who believe in the Great Dao should swear their loyalty and sincerity to the Dao and cannot linger between belief and disbelief. This kind of deed

transgresses the ethics of the Great Dao. It is a severe sin to betray the Dao to popular belief, and may bring disaster that will kill the whole family."

50. See *Chisongzi zhangli*, 3.22a, in *Daozang*, vol.11, 199.
51. See *Jin shu* 晉書 80.2106 and *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語, *juan* 1.
52. See *Laojun yinsong jiejing*, 16a, in *Daozang*, vol.18, 539.
53. See *Xuandu lüwen*, 8b, in *Daozang*, vol.3, 458.
54. See Wang Tianlin 王天麟, "Tianshidao jiaotuan de zuiguan jiqi xiande sixiang" 天師道教團的罪觀及其仙德思想, in Li Fengmao and Zhu Ronggui eds., *Yishi, miaohui yu shequ*, 512–13.
55. See *Luxiansheng daomen kelue* 陸先生道門科略, 2a, 8a, in *Daozang*, vol. 24, 728–31
56. See *Santian neijie jing*, 1.6b, in *Daozang*, vol. 28, 414.
57. See Ōfuchi Ninji, *Shoki no Dōkyō*, 155. There are different English translations of "*sanguan*" such as the "Three Offices," "Three Bureaus," and "Three Administrations." All of these translations are problematic. Kristofer Schipper's translation of *sanguan* as "Three Officials" is better. See Kristofer Schipper, *The Daoist Body*, trans. Karen Duval (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 135. Ōfuchi Ninji further explains the notion of *sanguan* by referring to the *Shuowen jiezi*, in which the term *guan* 官 is defined as "clerks in the service of the emperor" (吏事君也). See Ōfuchi Ninji, "Dōkyō sangen setsu no seisei to tenkai," 19.
58. See *Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1982), 381.
59. See Rao Zongyi, *Laozi Xiang'er zhu jiaozheng*, 70.
60. See Zhao Yi, *Gaiyu congkao*, 750.
61. Chen Yuan, comp., Chen Zhichao and Zeng Qingying, eds., *Daojia jinshi lüe* 道家金石略 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1988), 1117, cites a stele inscription from a temple of the Three Officials of Heaven, Earth, and Water in Mengzhou dated 1287, which reads, "Heaven and Earth are parents of all creations. Water is the most outstanding among the five elements, as it is the beginning as well as the completed end." However, the passage that contains this citation also goes on to state that "one cannot find the proper name of the Three Officials except those in Daoist scriptures. No further details can be found."
62. Kristofer Schipper, "General Introduction," in Kristofer and Franscisus Verellen eds., *The Taoist Canon*, 12.
63. *Santian neijie jing* 1.5b; translation by Stephen Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, 215.
64. See Chi-tim Lai, "The Opposition of Heavenly Master Taoism to Popular Cults during the Six Dynasties," *Asia Major 3rd series* 11 (1998): 1–20.
65. See *Dadao jialing jie*, in *Daozang*, vol.18, 57.
66. For the metaphors of water (*shui* 水) in ancient Chinese texts, see Sarah Allan, *The Way of Water and Sprouts of Virtue* (Albany: University of New York Press, 1997).
67. See Kristofer Schipper, "Daoism: The History of the Way," in *Daoism*

and the Arts of China, ed. Stephen Little (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 2000), 41.

68. *Sanguo zhi* 12.386 mentions the judicial system of the Three Officials in charge of penalties and laws during the Wei dynasty: "The decree claimed, 'Xun called a stag a horse; have him arrested and committed to the sergeant of the court.' The sergeant then discussed the punishment and said that he was 'to be thrown into prison for five years.' The Three Officials did not agree with this, and said, 'According to the law, [he] should submit two units of gold as a penalty.' At this the emperor fell into rage and said, 'Xun deserves to be killed; how dare you indulge him? Send him to the Three Officials.'"
69. See Kristofer Schipper, "Daoism: The History of the Way," 41–42, and Ōfuchi Ninji, "Dōkyō sangen setsu no seisei to tenkai," 18.
70. Rao Zongyi, *Laozi Xiang'er zhu jiaozheng*, 20. Stephen Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, 102.
71. *Zhengyi fawen tianshidao jiaojie kejing*, 20a, in *Daozang*, vol.18, 574.
72. The *Zhen'gao* 真誥 (Declarations of the Perfected), 7.6a, in *Daozang*, vol. 20, 528, mentions that Hua Qiao 華僑 was summoned and sentenced by the Official of Water because he revealed the secrets of Heaven: "Qiao then committed a sin that deserved death, and so his name was erased from the register of the living, and he submitted his head to the Official of Water." The *Zhen'gao* (13.4a) also remarks that "the title of the Three Officials is similar to the present judiciary administration that is in charge of punishments and indictments."
73. *Zhengyi tianshi gao Zhao Sheng koujue* 正一天師告趙昇口訣, 4a, in *Daozang*, vol.32, 593.
74. *Chisongzi zhangli*, 1. 2a, in *Daozang*, vol.11, 173.
75. *Chisongzi zhangli*, 6. 8a, in *Daozang*, vol.11, 225.
76. *Dongzhen huangshu* 洞真黃書, 11a, in *Daozang*, vol.33, 595.
77. *Lu xiansheng daomen kelüe*, 3a, in *Daozang*, vol. 24, 780.
78. *Lu xiansheng daomen kelüe*, 9a, in *Daozang*, vol.24, 782.
79. *Dengzhen yinjue*, 3.13a, in *Daozang*, vol. 6, 621.
80. Michel Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine*, 4.
81. *Dengzhen yinjue*, 3.14b–22b, in *Daozang*, vol. 6, 621–24.
82. *Dengzhen yinjue*, 3.8b, in *Daozang*, vol.6, 619.
83. *Dengzhen yinjue*, 3.9b, in *Daozang*, vol.6, 620.
84. There are more than thirty quotations of the "Protocol of the Twelve Hundred Officials" preserved in the *Dengzhen yinjue* in the *Daozang*. In his exegesis of the *Dengzhen yinjue*, Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 mentions that "the Protocol of the Twelve Hundred Officials originated from the Hanzhong area and was handed down through generations; it is a text of long history."
85. See Schipper and Verellen, eds., *The Taoist Canon*, 482.
86. *Taishang xuanci zhuhua zhang*, 2.12a, in *Daozang*, vol. 11, 319.

87. *Lu xiansheng daomen kelüe* 2a, in *Daozang*, vol. 24, 780; *Santian neijie jing* 1.6b, in *Daozang*. vol. 28, 414.
88. See Ōfuchi Ninji, *Shoki no dōkyō*, 151–54; also see Rolf A. Stein, "Religious Taoism and Popular Religion from the Second to Seventh Century," in *Facets of Taoism,* ed. Holmes Welch and Anna Seidel (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 73.
89. See *Zhouli zhushu* 周禮注疏, *juan* 14, "to stop the lawsuit with *Zhiji* as the pledge" (以質劑結信而止訟); in Zheng Xuan's 鄭玄 commentary on this item, we read, "*Zhiji* means two writs and one letter, and differentiates between writ and letter, like the personal writs nowadays."
90. See *Han shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1962), 7.224.
91. See *Lu xiansheng daomen kelue*, 9a, in *Daozang*, vol. 24, 732; also see *Taishang xuanci zhuhuazhang*, 2.13b, in *Daozang*, vol. 11, 319.
92. See *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記, *juan* 8 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1961), 56; translation from Robert Campany, *To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 351, with slight modification.
93. See *Lu xiansheng daomen kelüe*, 8a, in *Daozang*, vol. 24, 731.
94. See *Taishang xuanci zhuhuazhang*, 2.13a, in *Daozang*, vol. 11, 319.
95. See *Santian neijie jing*, 1.6a, in *Daozang*, vol. 28, 414.
96. As cited in the *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽, *juan* 679 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1960), 3029.
97. See *Chuanshou Sandong jingjie falu lüeshuo, juan* 1, in *Daozang*, vol. 32, 296.

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7

Imagining Community

Family Values and Morality in the Lingbao Scriptures

Stephen R. Bokenkamp

In his recent article, "A History of Surrender" 屈服史, the intellectual historian Ge Zhaoguang has identified three ways that Six Dynasties Daoism seemingly "surrendered" to the forces of social and imperial orthodoxy.[1] He argues that: (1) The early Celestial Masters organized their followers into twenty-four parishes—administrative centers in fact—but abandoned the system; (2) The Celestial Masters originally practiced traditional seasonal agricultural rituals, but later reformed them and began to criticize local cults; (3) Early Celestial Masters practiced a sexual ordination ritual which they later abandoned under criticism from Buddhists and others.

The portrayal Ge gives of Daoism is provocative, meant as a challenge, but it is really *not* unusual. Modern scholars routinely portray Daoism as having given up a number of its most cherished tenets when Buddhism washed over the Middle Kingdom in the third and fourth centuries. While Ge does not mention it, such descriptions of the Daoist religion would lead us to believe that its greatest "surrender" occurred when, early in the fifth century, the Lingbao 靈寶 scriptures comprehensively adopted aspects of Buddhist doctrine. In particular, as Erik Zürcher has described the matter, the doctrine of *saṁsāra* came, in the Lingbao scriptures, to shore up one of the "soft areas" of Chinese thought.[2] China's "vague and conflicting ideas about life beyond the grave," he argues, made Daoists vulnerable to "Buddhist influence" in this area.[3]

Zürcher's views have been influential. Following him, a number of recent studies would have us understand that this capitulation involved,

to some extent or another, a repudiation of the familial responsibility of ancient China in favor of the individual responsibility of karmic predestination. Even in Japan and China, this view predominates.[4] In this chapter, I take issue with this assessment. I will argue that the authors of the Lingbao scriptures, rather than "surrendering" to Buddhist ideas, explicitly manipulate them in ways that served to reassert traditional Chinese values, to answer certain questions, or solve certain problems. Thus, the Lingbao scriptures, while concerned as well with matters of personal destiny, show throughout a marked tendency to reconfigure traditional ideas of familial responsibility so as to accommodate a distinctive, new notion of rebirth. The codes of morality and ethics found in the Lingbao texts are rooted in the new cosmology that resulted from this effort. This "Chinese" take on rebirth and family, I will argue, came to be well accepted and even impacted the way Buddhism was understood and practiced in China.

Before beginning, however, I want to clear away a bit of conceptual underbrush that stands in our way, so to speak. The charges of "surrender," "capitulation," or even "influence," regularly brought against Daoism rest implicitly on a certain understanding of religion. This understanding, as I argued in my "The Silkworm and the Bodhi Tree," holds that religions have pure origins, articulated by their founders, from which any later deviation is seen to be the result of "contamination," either from society at large or from other religious systems.[5] Such a teleological view of religious development, based, as J. Z. Smith shows, on certain Christian notions of religion, is *not* the medieval Chinese understanding. In his important recent article, "On the Very Idea of Religion," Robert Campany explores a few of the underlying metaphors employed by the early medieval Chinese in talking about their religions.[6] The predominant metaphor is that of a Dao, or "path." This way of conceptualizing religion leads to very different entailments than the prevailing Western notion of religion as a container. Several of these entailments are relevant here: A path may join another for a while but still maintain its integrity as a separate way. Moreover, a path may meander, especially in an effort to avoid obstacles. One consequence of this view of religion is that, for the early medieval Chinese, religious change and syncretism could be contemplated in ways that were less possible in the West. These observations require that we withhold charges of "capitulation" or "influence," at

least until we understand the mechanisms by which religious change and accommodation were believed to, and actually did, work in early medieval China.

In addition, I want to say something about the way I will read the Lingbao moral injunctions that I will discuss. My very first article on the Lingbao scriptures—a survey of the scriptures—rested in part on the assumption that texts are produced in specific contexts.[7] That is to say, writers do not respond to their social environment in vague and unmediated ways, but particularly and precisely to the actual questions, challenges, and concerns posed to them by their intended audience. This was especially true in early China, where texts were not written in ivory towers, but in collusion with those who would practice them. To prove this assertion would take us too far afield. So I will mention only the female historian Ban Zhao 班昭 (ca. 48–116), who, uncharacteristically for her time, completed the work of her father and her brother on the history of the Former or Western Han. Following the completion of the work, she was invited to *teach the text* to those officers who would put its lessons into practice (such as Ma Rong 馬融 [79–166] and others).[8] From this, we can see that texts, even histories, were not expected to speak for themselves. Writings responded to current issues and needed to be interpreted, taught, and finally actualized by those who received them correctly. This procedure of textual implementation was so important in China that they might even break convention to make a woman teacher of a text.

In that first article, I worked to discover a few of the members of the audience, or interlocutors, for the Lingbao scriptures—Buddhist converts, rival Daoists, and the like. In one particular instance, noticing the ways in which the texts responded to current criticisms of the posthumous reputation of Ge Xuan 葛玄, the transcendent paragon of the Ge family, allowed me to add circumstantial evidence to the traditional attribution of the scriptures to Ge Xuan's descendant, Ge Chaofu 葛巢甫. Who else but a member of the Ge family would have been drawn to defend him?

The same regard for audience concerns, I will argue, extends to the composition and deployment of moral codes. Michel Strickmann taught us that proscriptive passages can be read as descriptions of what people were actually doing at the time of composition. If people were not committing certain sins, why prohibit them?[9] Terry Kleeman, whose

work on Celestial Master moral codes I will cite, takes this one step farther. He asks "What did those who wrote the codes want to defend?" That is, precepts also serve to construct prohibitive barriers around certain sanctioned practices, rendering them inviolable commandments of the gods. Both Strickmann and Kleeman tend to regard such texts as the products of single religious figures, casting a jaundiced eye on the depraved practices of the current age. I operate, further, on the hypothesis that moral codes are joint products of author and "audience." The content and placement of moral codes can, in brief, tell us both about the concerns of those who composed scriptures and about the communities for whom, and with whom, they were composed.

Take, for instance, the *Commands and Admonitions for Families of the Great Dao*, a Celestial Master circular composed in 255, as the Wei kingdom was beginning to collapse.[10] Though written in a strong, monitory voice, one could argue that the text's very survival beyond the events that prompted its composition assures us that it spoke to the needs of its community. Beyond that, however, there are moments that seem to respond to more specific questions from the extended audience. "Can I pass on my ecclesiastical office to my descendants?" for example.[11] Identification of such passages can aid us in determining the social environment and goals of a text, as well as the uses to which it was put.

The questions I want to ask of the texts I will treat, then, are these: Rather than merely pointing to areas of change as "Buddhist influence," I want to know what work these ideas are made to do; what problems do they address? And who might have suggested these problems as worthy of attention? Put another way: In the Lingbao scriptures what changes were made to borrowed Buddhist elements and in service to whom? Once we rephrase the question in this way, "influence" is ruled out of court. We focus, more properly, on the agents of change and their concerns.

As part of my larger project of exploring the remarkable fact that the Lingbao texts are the first Daoist scriptures to wholeheartedly embrace the idea of rebirth, I will analyze below one set of moral injunctions found in the Lingbao scriptures and other passages from the scriptures related to it. Zürcher wrote that "there can be no doubt that Buddhist morality as codified in several sets of commands and prohibitions deeply influenced the system of Daoist ethics...here again the influence is much

stronger in the Lingbao tradition than elsewhere."[12] Warned off by this strong claim, I must admit that I was slow to see how Lingbao codes of morality could have anything to do with its distinctive notions of rebirth. I was wrong.

The passage I will treat is the list of 180 transgressions found in no. 18 of the original Lingbao scriptures, the *Precepts of the Three Primes* 太上洞玄靈寶三元品戒功德輕重經 (HY 456, 22a–31a).[13] This list of transgressions is important in the history of Daoism in that it seems to have been the prototype of the equally well-known 180 Precepts of Lord Lao 老君百八十戒.[14] Now, the *Precepts of the Three Primes* are not presented as precepts, but in the form of transgressions (*zui* 罪) to be avoided. The first twenty-two are meant for those engaged in "study of the Higher Way" and the remainder for those outside the church. But, the fact that these transgressions are judged each year in assemblies of the deities entails that they are injunctions to be ignored only at one's peril.[15] Thus, while they are not expressed in the form of other precepts, preceded by "one should" or "one should not," the intent of the list is clear. I will thus refer to them as "injunctions."

In order to judge how much is new in this list of injunctions and what it might mean, I will first compare them with a list of early Celestial Master moral codes found in the *Demon Statutes of Nüqing*, a third-century text studied by Terry Kleeman.[16] Kleeman's major findings are two. (1) He shows how the early church "felt threatened by the mainstream of popular religious practice and the attraction of competing new religious movements" and sought to defend their practices by prohibiting deviance. (2) Kleeman further demonstrates that the *Nüqing* precepts are almost obsessively concerned with offenses concerning the sexual ordination ritual of *heqi* 合氣 or "joining pneumas."

When we compare the Lingbao *Precepts of the Three Primes* list with the *Nüqing* Precepts, the first obvious point is that the Lingbao list makes no mention of transgressions that might be specifically related to the sexual practice of *heqi*. As other references in the Lingbao scriptures make clear, that was no longer considered a sanctioned Daoist practice in the Lingbao system.[17]

The Lingbao list of transgressions does, however, continue the other central concern of the *Nüqing* Precepts isolated by Kleeman, what I call the emphasis on "ecclesiastical discipline." Kleeman notes that such injunctions in the *Nüqing* Precepts

> range from contradicting or revealing the plans of a Daoist priest (2), to jealous gossiping about fellow Daoists (15). There are prohibitions on transmitting the Dao to inappropriate persons (7) or divulging scriptures to the profane (22). Faithfulness was mandatory and punishment was decreed for breaking faith with the Dao of Heaven (4), denying the existence of the gods (2), or contradicting the words of a priest (2). Schismatics seem to have been a special concern, with repeated injunctions against forming your own group (16), establishing your own religion (4), or falsely claiming to speak on behalf of the Dao when in fact relaying the words of demonic forces (8).[18]

All of these injunctions, and more, find expression in the *Precepts of the Three Primes*, sometimes in nearly identical words. In fact, more than one-third of the Lingbao transgressions deal with matters related to ecclesiastical discipline. We are led to speculate that, just as for the early Celestial Masters, so for the emerging Lingbao movement, such self-protective prohibitions were of especial service to new religious movements attempting to stake out territory in a lively religious landscape.[19]

But there are certain differences in the pursuit of this ecclesiastical discipline that bear investigation. These differences highlight some of the changes in Daoist practice between the third and the early fifth centuries and will lead us to view with greater precision just what Daoists hoped to accomplish through adopting the concept of rebirth.

As Kleeman notes, the *Nüqing* Precepts show concern for what seem to be schismatic mediums, who "pretending to speak for the Great Dao, recklessly pronounce the words of demons." In the Lingbao list, we do find several injunctions concerning the sin of worshipping demons (C.12), cursing in their names (A.30), placing one's faith in false religions (C.41) or even calling oneself a Perfected being (C.40).[20]

But, for Lingbao Daoists, the greatest outside threat seems not to have been mediumistic pronouncements, but scriptural indiscretion. Members are specifically warned against illicitly obtaining scriptures and transmitting them to disciples (A.8, A.7) or even making copies of scriptures that have not been properly transmitted by a master (A.5). All humans can expect punishment for divulging celestial texts (A.38). But the transgressions go beyond the matter of protecting proper methods of transmission. It is wrong to belittle scriptures (B.55, C.37), to copy

passages from them in ways that *might* lead to disclosure (C.44) or even to falsely claim to have received them in revelation (C.42, C.58).

Those of us who study Daoism are accustomed to read of this attention to scriptural purity in Daoist texts, but the concern is especially striking here, given the propensity of the authors of the Lingbao texts to transcribe passages from other scriptural works. At any rate, all of this attention to the proper handling of scriptures underlines what we know from Michel Strickmann and others of the busy scriptural market in the early fifth century. As Strickmann has shown, there was often a price for receiving a text and the teachings that would allow one to actualize it.[21] This led, of course, to abuse.

But there is a further aspect of the *Precepts of the Three Primes* that does not find such emphasis in the *Nüqing* Precepts. These injunctions concern further matters of ritual discipline. Punishable transgressions here include violating religious oaths (A.3) and not practicing or insincerely practicing Retreats (A.18–19, C.5). Even such seemingly minor infractions as chatting with others or failing to make the proper announcements to the spirits when one enters the oratory (C.53–54) earn divine punishment.[22] There are a number of further passages I have not translated dealing with announcements to be made to the deities on specific days or in specific ritual situations. The early Lingbao movement was, I conclude, particularly concerned with the *correct* practice of its rituals. This is not particularly surprising in the Chinese context, where correct ritual practice was held a paramount good. But we need to remember that correct practice was important only insofar as it was held to yield appropriate response. This raises again the question: What did adherents to the newly emerging doctrines of Lingbao hope to accomplish thereby? Where do we find the voices of contemporary interlocutors?

But let us continue our interrogation of the differences between early Celestial Master practice and the Lingbao "reformation." The Lingbao transgressions betray an even more obsessive concern than do the authors of the *Demon Statutes of Nüqing* with what we would call matters of "faith." One is not to doubt, criticize, or even discuss the truth of the scriptures. There are altogether five items that deal with this (A.1, A.2, A.39, B.55, C.37). The same reverence extends to masters, who should never be criticized or judged (A.3–4, A.25, B.54, C.47). Here, again, the importance of correct, sanctioned practice of the doctrine is foregrounded.

Finally, we need to account for one category of transgression that finds no representation in the *Demon Statutes* at all. Even when one leaves out injunctions against murder, duplicity, betrayal, covetousness, and the like—common to all moral codes—there remain a striking number of injunctions that speak against betrayal of the family and the group. Indiscretions against "fellow students [of the Dao]" (*tongxue* 同學) or the "good people" (*shanren* 善人), a term I take to refer to adherents to the Way of Lingbao, seem particularly important given the frequency of mention (see A.23, A.43, B.1, B.36, C.2). And, beyond injunctions concerning filial piety, one should not urge others to be unfilial (C.39), disobey or disrespect the *paterfamilias*, or leave the family (B.60).

I have suggested, following Kleeman, that this concern with ecclesiastical discipline finds its impetus, both for the early Celestial Masters and the nascent Lingbao movement, in exigencies attendant on establishing a new religion. One would want to mark off one's doctrines and practices as divinely sanctioned and inviolable. One would want to contrast them, as clearly as possible, from contemporary religious rituals. In this way, the *Precepts of the Three Primes*, through its extensive concern with matters of ecclesiastical discipline, reveals just how disorganized Daoists were in the early fifth century, when numerous masters, each peddling new revelations, seemed to mark the end of what had once been a tight organization. As before, regional cultic traditions threatened the integrity of Daoist practice, as did the new attractions of Buddhist practice.

But there is an added twist to this concern in the Lingbao scriptures. And this twist leads us to consideration of the specific concerns citizens of the late fourth and early fifth centuries might have brought to the fore. Matters of group and family identity—and by this I mean identity with ancestors as well—seem to be much more important than they were earlier. We can best gauge the extent of this concern by turning to other texts in the Lingbao canon that describe those incarcerated in the earth-prisons who have violated the prohibitions found in the *Precepts of the Three Primes*.[23] These unfortunates are the object of salvific rituals of the scriptures.

Here are two examples from the *Falun zuifu* 法輪罪福 (*Transgressions and Blessings from the Scripture of the Wheel of the Law*). This scripture recounts the instructions granted the Transcendent Duke Ge

Xuan by three celestial beings. The passages cited here come from the second of these revelations (HY 455), granted by the deity Guang miaoyin 光妙音. In these two cases the sinners are held in the southeast and the northwest. The transgressors in the southeast are those who have violated the Dao in the following ways:

> The transgressors here in their former lives killed living beings to perform excessive sacrifices, making offerings to and feeding mediums and demons. They derided Daoists and criticized the Perfected; discarded the laws and joined false sects. Turning their backs on their masters and rebelling against the Way, they cursed the good people. They bared their heads, loosed their hair, looked up to heaven and called upon spirits, making onerous and ungoverned entreaties that were in all cases designed to murder others. Some of them degraded the sun and moon and made curses [based] upon the constellations. They created their own methods and did not keep faith with their karmic destinies. . . . [The text goes on to include grave robbers and those who dug in the earth without appeasing local spirits.]
> 此之罪人前身殺生淫祀, 祭飼巫鬼。誹笑道士, 訕毀真人。棄法入僞, 背師叛道, 咒詛善人。被頭散髮, 仰天叫神, 厭禱無道, 輒欲殺人。或輕慢日月, 罵詈星辰。自作一法, 不信宿命 …。[24]

These are all crimes involving practice of Chinese common religion. The mediums, shamans, and ritualists who operated in communities were individual actors whose performances of mastery often brought to them patronage and the allegiance of numerous followers.[25] We can learn much about the way these performers operated from such criticisms. Rolf Stein, and following him, Strickmann and Peter Nickerson, have conditioned us to see Daoism as largely objecting to its closest rival, the indigenous traditions from which it grew.[26] It was particularly striking to me, then, that the majority of critical passages in the Lingbao hell texts seem to be directed not at these practitioners, but at other "Daoists." Here is an example:

> Having not received the scriptures and rituals, they paid bribes with faith offerings to take receipt [of them]. Their hearts full of envy and desire, they received the scriptures when they were not ready, wanting only to be masters. They did not accord with the time

> limits in making transmission to their disciples, nor did they make a pact with heaven and earth. [In fact] there was no covenant at all. They continuously transmitted [texts] to one another even when the recipient was not respectful and the transmitter was not sincere. They chanted and exposed secret writs, causing them to be promulgated among the profane. This led to the ignorant and the profane blaming the Perfected of the Dao and criticizing the precious scriptures. Some received scriptures only to sully them and be lax about practicing them, thereby slighting the three treasures. They did not receive the instructions of a master, but employed their own understandings. Some of them were not sincere in carrying out retreats and their meditations were not single-minded.
>
> 不受經法, 齎信奉受。心追吝惜, 受經未備, 強欲作師。不依年限, 傳授弟子, 不關天地, 無有盟約。更相傳付, 得者不恭, 付者不精。唱露秘文, 流布俗間。致令愚俗毀咎道真, 詆毀寶經。或受經穢慢, 輕忽三寶。不承師訓, 自用一意。或齋戒不精, 思念不專。[27]

This grouping of infractions helps us to read the injunctions we have just reviewed. In fact, all of these infractions appear in the *Precepts of the Three Primes*. Further, an almost identical list of the crimes of the damned, divided into fourteen items rather than ten, appears in the *Statutes of the Luminous Perfected*, or perhaps *Statutes of the Sworn Alliance with the Perfected* (HY 1400, Schipper: 1411). Of the fourteen causes of evil karma presented in this text, eleven involve similar "Daoist" infractions against the community of the faithful.[28] That is to say, the majority of practices condemned in this text as well can be associated with other Daoists. It is significant, and a point I will return to in a moment, that *only one of the condemned practices is in any way Buddhist.*

Of course, murder, theft, and deceit—commonplaces in the commandments of all religions—separate one from society as well. But in these scriptures those incarcerated in the hells, suffering appropriate retributions, are shown to be there in large part because they have already separated themselves not from society as a whole, but from one particular part of society, the community that has taken the covenants of Lingbao and entered brightness. Those who isolate themselves most completely are those fellow Daoists who reject the status of "good person" or "fellow student" by refusing to heed the lessons of Lingbao.

This fact has definite consequences for the way we understand the message of the Lingbao scriptures, underlining again that the Lingbao dispensation was meant to be a reformation of Daoism.

The fact that the same crimes are mentioned in the *Statutes of the Luminous Perfected* and mediated with a ritual practice that was to be performed by all Lingbao adherents, provides us with another important clue as to the deployment of these injunctions—and of the community concerns that prompted them.

The *Statutes* opens with the Celestial Worthy, like the Buddha, emanating light that illumines the heavens and hells. This pyrotechnic display is for the purpose of enlightening one Disciple of Higher Wisdom 上智童子. After explaining the ten causes of good karma and the fourteen causes of evil karma, the Celestial Worthy responds to an entreaty from the Most High Lord of the Dao 太上道君 to create a simple ritual by which the worthy might rescue their ancestors from sufferings in the infernal regions.

On eighty days of the year, adherents are to set a nine-foot, nine-branched lamp in the courtyard of their houses. This, we are informed, will illumine the hells and heavens in the nine regions. Following an invocation of deities who will communicate wishes to the higher gods, the scripture is to be placed under the lamp and the performers are to prostrate themselves to the ten directions of space while delivering their words of commitment (*yuan* 願), indicating that the merit generated through the ritual should deliver beings from the hells.[29] The list of these beings includes "the emperor and his officials, Masters of Law who have received the Dao, father and mother and my revered kin, fellow-students, servants, Daoist masters residing in reclusion in the mountains and forests, all the worthy, and all sentient beings that fly, wriggle or crawl." It would seem from this that this is indeed a rite of universal salvation, and not about one's individual ancestors at all. But look at the ranked ordering. Fathers, mothers, and kinfolk follow in importance only emperor, officials, and Masters and precede "fellow students" and other Daoists. Further, a warning uttered by a Flying Heaven spirit at the end of the text states, "If a student does not understand (*ming* 明) to light lamps and burn incense, his seven generations of ancestors will not obtain salvation from the nine infernal regions of the halls of eternal night. Their bodies will be without illumination and their punishment will be turned over to the Department of Grand

Darkness (*taiyin cao* 太陰曹)."[30] All this reveals clearly enough, I think, that the ultimate concern of most participants in the ritual was the salvation of their own ancestors.[31]

As they utter their *yuan* (words of commitment), the performants not only knock their heads in obeisance, but also slap themselves, some 660 times according to Schipper's count.[32] These acts are to be understood not as self-abnegation, but as powerful demonstrations meant to move the gods to action. The performants celebrate their sense of inclusion in a group bound by holy covenant, a sense that shines throughout the simple ritual presented in the *Statutes of the Luminous Perfected*.

This is true both literally and figuratively. In that one meaning of the word *ming* is to "understand, be clear about," the effect of the ritual, as stated in the words of commitment, is that all the ancestors incarcerated in the hells be granted "the opening of full light [= understanding of past transgressions], so that they all be released and the roots of faithfulness be planted within them" (開諸光明，咸得解脫，轉入信根). In other words, they are to be posthumously converted. As a result, they will be transferred into the heavens or granted an extremely fortunate rebirth. This is, of course, a transfer of merit worthy of a bodhisattva and not, in Buddhism, something that a mere adherent might possibly transfer to a hell-being. But these particular "bodhisattva figures" are credited with no greater accomplishment than that they have, with full sincerity, performed this ritual. In this way, the Lingbao scriptures mobilize one of the most attractive promises of Buddhist doctrine, the ability to save the dead. At the same time, they make this ability accessible to all and direct it to the family dead.

Here, I think, we can detect some of the community concerns that informed the composition of a number of the 180 injunctions of the *Precepts of the Three Primes*. The strong emphasis on family cohesion, group solidarity, and scriptural inviolability we find in the injunctions reveals the anxiety many religious persons of the late fourth and early fifth centuries must have felt concerning the prospects of finding the most effective practice in a crowded religious scene. The text asserts that *all* gods, in their thrice-yearly assembly, judge those who transgress against family, group, or scriptural purity. They punish those who oppose "the good people," the gathering body of Lingbao adherents.

But the deployment of these injunctions, in the *Falun zuifu* and, particularly, the *Statutes of the Luminous Perfected*, highlight and

answer a different concern: "If these are the inviolable laws of heaven, what of my ancestors, who died before they had the chance to hear of the Lingbao scriptures?" That is to say, even if a Daoist joined the new Lingbao movement (which by its own account was to remain hidden until revealed by a descendant of Ge Xuan and in fact came to be promulgated only by 400 or so), his or her ancestors, though they may have been Celestial Masters adherents themselves, were condemned to the darkness.[33] Even as Daoists, they had been born too early to take advantage of salvation. Their fate would seem to be rather like that of the "enlightened" philosophers Plato and Aristotle, who prefigured the Christian message but lived too early to know the Christ in Dante's system. But there was an added concern in the Chinese case. As I have taken some pains to show in my recent book, dead ancestors could still act in the world, often in exceedingly disturbing ways.[34] They could curse their living descendants with poverty and disease when they became involved in underworld lawsuits (*zhongsong* 塚訟), join the ranks of spectral hordes to spread epidemics, or even bring about the fall of families and dynasties. In the ritual included in the *Statutes of the Luminous Perfected*, the community reaches out to share the light with these misguided souls, for good reasons of self-protection.

I mentioned above that there is one transgression in these various texts that might possibly apply to Buddhism. It is, in fact, one that aligns well with the family-centered values of the Lingbao scriptures. The *Precepts of the Three Primes* mentions twice (B.44 and B.60) the transgression of "leaving the family." There are, in addition, several references to the sin of going against the wishes of the head of family—something those who went off to be monks and nuns were frequently forced to do. The *Wheel of the Law* finds in hell those who "are unkind, unfilial, lacking in benevolence and loyalty, who curse and disgrace their parents by separating themselves from their relatives."[35] The *Statutes of the Luminous Perfected* goes so far as to list the fault of "leaving one's natal family, separating oneself from one's bones and flesh"[36] alongside the sin of incest. Both, it seems, bring equally a threat of division to the family. It seems fairly clear from this that Lingbao values follow Buddhist models only so far. And it is the sanctity of the extended family—both the living and the family that extends beyond the grave, that is—that finally constitutes the important boundary separating the two paths.

The Lingbao scriptures devote an inordinate amount of space to explaining the concept of rebirth. They emphasize rebirth's inevitability and universality, specify the deeds that lead to good or bad rebirths, and outline in some detail the specific signs that point to a bad karmic past. If one has the misfortune to be born lame, blind, or a woman, one can be certain of the reason. That is why Lingbao adherents proved, in the event and quite against their intentions, among the proselytizers for the Buddhist doctrine of rebirth. But the sort of rebirth the Lingbao authors imagine is made fully compatible with Chinese ancestral practice, compatible in ways that Buddhism itself eventually learned. Witness the importance in China of the Mulian story or the eventual popularity of the Buddhist "Ghost Festival" studied by Stephen Teiser.[37]

But here we need to be cautious in forwarding claims for the innovativeness of the Lingbao scriptures. Gregory Schopen has argued strongly that "filiality" was not something alien to Indic Buddhism, and Reiko Ohnuma has added valuable insight into familial resistance to joining the *sangha* in Indian Buddhist tale literature, so I do not want to make my case too starkly.[38] What I am talking about here is a matter not of difference, but of emphasis.

This emphasis arises from the "imagined community" of family proper to Chinese ancestral practice. By the fifth century, not only the new Buddhist doctrine of rebirth, but also the threats to the family of war, dislocation, and epidemic had rent apart this orderly system linking the living with their revered dead. Whereas those of earlier periods were loath to discuss the actual placement of ancestors in any detail, now the precise fate of all was cruelly imagined in Buddhist and Daoist texts as well as in popular tale literature. Whereas before, at least the empowered dead could be counted upon to bring grace to the living, now the dead were shown as in need of grace. Whereas before, private cults could proclaim ability to erase the boundaries between the living and the dead, now the Lingbao scriptures claim that only the communal, as an extension and revitalization of the family, could provide relief.

This latter point is of some interest. Peter Brown, in his study of the cult of the saints, noticed the way in which "tension between the private and the communal [led] to a debate on superstition" in Latin Christianity.[39] The same sort of debate on superstition is evident in Lingbao Daoism. The codifier of the scriptures, Lu Xiujing 陸修靜

(406–477), in his "Abridged Codes" certainly takes this tack. For Lu, anything beyond the covenant is "private" and superstitious in the sense that it harks back to the rule of the Six Heavens, those benighted dead Strickmann has described as the "pantheon of the profane."[40] His extensive criticisms of the misguided rituals of mediums and schismatic Daoists—all demons, really—find their source in the lists of transgressions that land one in hell as recounted in the *Statutes of the Luminous Perfected* and the *Falun zuifu*. And these texts instruct those whose ancestors figured in this pantheon, and were thus more likely sources of familial disaster than of familial blessing, how to convert them to the True Way.

Thus, I find myself growing uncomfortable with binary discourse that too easily opposes the communal to the private. It is, in fact, common in analyzing medieval Chinese religions to set up a stark dichotomy between what Strickmann has called "two types of karma"—the Indic mode of individual responsibility and the Sinic mode of corporate responsibility whereby a person's fate was intimately tied to that of their ancestors.[41] By this logic, one can characterize each deviation from what one takes to be the "Indic mode" of individual karmic responsibility that one finds in a Chinese text on rebirth as a "mistake" or "misunderstanding" of borrowed elements.[42] This, after all, is Zürcher's final view of Daoist "borrowings." By his view, Daoists "misunderstand," misinterpret, "mix up," or "distort" Buddhist ideas—as if their goal were to get it right! If we go down this path, we would indeed have to understand the Lingbao adoption of "Indic karma" as a greater "surrender" than any Ge Zhaoguang studied in his book. And, I am afraid, that is how a number of my colleagues continue to construe the matter.

I would argue that Daoists were not ultimately concerned, any more, that is, than were Chinese Buddhist monks, with the correct "canonical" reception of Buddhist doctrine. Religions are never so simply transmitted and received. The religious respond, instead, to the concerns of the people who undertake to practice their tenets. For heuristic purposes, we might as scholars want to set up two poles of understanding, but we need to recognize at the outset that most of the actual Chinese data with which we have to deal will fall somewhere in the middle. The Lingbao scriptures we have surveyed are a case in point. The Lingbao scriptures in fact argue explicitly against the Indic-Sinic

dichotomy. The middle path they chart participates in the time-honored intellectual strategy by which an imagined community—*Zhongguo*, the central kingdom, or China—since the earliest recorded times negotiated cultural, religious, and intellectual differences to facilitate unity.

In line with this strategy, the Lingbao scriptures made certain modifications to Buddhist doctrine, which it now claimed for its own. These modifications derive not from some omniscient author, but from the concerns of those who interacted with the author(s) and would receive and enact the texts produced. This can tell us much about the spread of ideas of rebirth among the Chinese populace by the end of the fourth century. But it speaks to other concerns as well. During this divisive period of Chinese history, dislocation and disease had convinced many that their ancestors were working not for, but against them. A variety of solutions vied for attention, and adherents.

Negotiating these two sorts of concerns leads to rather nuanced claims on the part of many, including the author(s) of the Lingbao scriptures. Thus, for the Lingbao scriptures, sin and the retribution it brings are an individual matter (as Buddhism had newly taught). Individual transgressions do not necessarily implicate family members, and especially those family members who have taken refuge in the practice of Lingbao.[43] This would placate those who feared that disgruntled or sinful ancestors might curse the living. But there is an obverse side to this concern. Were such family members then irredeemably lost? Were they destined to an unending cycle of rebirths, as some Buddhists would have it; or to an endless, lonely, and socially disruptive existence as hungry ghosts, as traditional views insisted?

Neither, the Lingbao texts insist. When we come to look at the actual transgressions outlined in the Lingbao scriptures, we find that these involve to a marked extent the sin of separating oneself from the family and, by extension, separation from the sanctioned family of the Dao that includes all families. By this model, the damned are individually responsible for their fates, while the saved still exist in a web of mutual responsibility, bound by merit transfer, family obligation, and the orderly regulation of the celestial bureaucracy. And the scriptures obligingly provide simple rituals by which the saved might include in this new "family" their own ancestors. The departed family members of Lingbao practitioners are thus not lost to either a "Sinic" or an "Indic" postmortem destiny, but are made part of the reconstituted family.

Through the remarkable practices outlined in the texts, they may be brought to understand their mistakes and brought to rebirth through the cooperation of the celestial bureaucracy enfolding the remembered dead. In this way, as in others, the Lingbao scriptures imagine a community that will restore straying ancestors, newly seen as subject to laws of karma and rebirth, to their natal families.

Appendix: Representative transgressions from the Lingbao *Precepts of the Three Primes*

太上洞玄靈寶三元品戒功德輕重經 (HY 456, 22a-31a)
The three sections of the text are here designated A, B, and C. All items include the words "the transgression of..." (...*zhi zui* 之罪), omitted in the translation below. In addition, the first twenty-two items in the first section are stipulated for "those who study the higher Dao" (學上道), while the remainders are for "students [of the Dao] and the common people" (學者及百姓子).

Transgressions involving mediumism/common religion:

A.30: taking oaths or cursing [in the name of] demons.
學者及百姓子呪詛鬼神之罪

C.12: having approached [the true Way] turning one's back on it to take up heterodox ways.
學者及百姓子去就背向非道之罪

C.32: doing obeisance to demonic spirits.
學者及百姓子拜禮神鬼之罪

C.40: proudly proclaiming a distinctive title for oneself or calling oneself a Perfected being.
學者及百姓子矯稱自異號為真人之罪

C.41: placing faith in other ways, diverse practices, or deviant views.
學者及百姓子信外道雜術邪見之罪

Transgressions involving scriptures:

A.5: stealing or copying scriptural texts that have not been bestowed by a Master.
學上道竊取經書無有師宗之罪

A.7: illicitly obtaining scriptures or passages of scripture to transmit to disciples.
學上道傍取經書而傳弟子之罪

A.8: obtaining scriptures without proper oaths and ordination by a Master.
學上道得經書無師盟度之罪

A.9: transmitting licitly gained scriptures without following the time schedule of the regulations.
學上道受經不依經科年月傳授之罪

A.38: revealing celestial writings.
學者及百姓子泄露天文之罪

B.55: belittling the scriptures and teachings or the words of the practice.
學者及百姓子輕慢經教法言之罪

C.37: rudeness or negligence concerning the three treasures; belittling the Celestial Worthies.
學者及百姓子傲慢三寶輕忽天尊之罪

C.42: undertaking the study without a scripture Master so as to deceive the spirits.
學者及百姓子無經師託學欺詐神人之罪

C.44: illicitly copying scriptures or precepts and thereby negligently revealing them.
學者及百姓子竊寫經戒慢露之罪

C.58: receiving the scriptures and practices from a Master, but proclaiming that one received these oneself.
學者及百姓子得師經道而自稱已得之罪

Transgressions of ritual discipline:

A.3: belittling one's Master and breaking vows and oaths.
學上道輕慢師主違背盟誓之罪

A.14: transmitting scriptures without making a nocturnal announcement to the Five Thearchs.
學上道傳經不宿奏五帝之罪

A.18: not practicing seasonal Retreats.
學上道不修齋直之罪

A.19: insincerely practicing seasonal Retreats.
學上道齋直不精之罪

C.5: not commemorating the Dao on days of celestial Retreat.
學者及百姓子諸天齋日不念道之罪

C.46: ascending the ritual platform with unclean body.
學者及百姓子身不潔淨登上高座之罪

C.53: entering or leaving the ritual chamber without making an announcement.
學者及百姓子出入道戶不關啟之罪

C.54: entering the ritual chamber while chatting with someone.
學者及百姓子妄與他人入道戶交語之罪

Transgressions of fidelity:

A.1: not trusting in the scriptures and precepts; harboring doubt or duplicity.
學上道不信經戒懷疑兩心之罪

A.2: belittling the holy writings or judging the scriptures.
學上道輕慢聖文評論經典之罪

A.4: slighting the Master or not revering the rites of heaven.
學上道毀謗師父不崇天義 [=儀?]之罪

A.25: judging the Master or other people.
學者及百姓子評論師主百姓之罪

A.39: destroying and slandering the scriptures and practices.
學者及百姓子毀謗經法之罪

B.54: discussing the merits and flaws of the Master or colleagues.
學者及百姓子評論師友長短之罪

B.55: slighting the scriptures and practices or the words of the Way.
學者及百姓子輕慢經教法言之罪

C.47: bringing discredit to one's Master or lacking reverence.
學者及百姓子穢慢師門不恭之罪

C.57: blaming the Dao or the Master when there is a death in the family.
學者及百姓子家有喪疾怨道咎師之罪

Further transgressions against family and community:

A.16: cutting off another's pursuit of goodness to thereby make a name for oneself.
學上道過斷賢路自取功名之罪

A.23: attacking the good people.
學者及百姓子攻擊善人之罪

A.43: deceiving one's fellow students.
學者及百姓子欺罔同學之罪

B.1: jealousy directed at one's fellow students.
學者及百姓子嫉姑同學之罪

B.36: attacking the good people and creating dissension.
學者及百姓子攻擊善人橫生無端之罪

B.46: growing distant from one's relatives to befriend another family.
學者及百姓子疏宗族親異姓之罪

B.60: separating from one's parents, brothers and sisters, to live apart.
學者及百姓子父母兄弟各別離居之罪

C.2: showing anger to or blaming the good people.
學者及百姓子意責善人之罪

C.39: urging others to be unfilial toward parents or brothers.
學者及百姓子勸人不孝父母兄弟之罪

Notes

1. Ge Zhaoguang 葛兆光, *Qufu shi ji qita: Liuchao Sui Tang daojiao de sixiang shi yanjiu* 屈服史及其他：六朝隋唐道教的思想史研究 (Beijing: Sanlian, 2003), 7–148.
2. Erik Zürcher, "Buddhist Influence on Early Taoism: A Survey of Scriptural Evidence," *T'oung Pao* LXVI, 1–3 (1980): 84–147.
3. Ibid., 121.
4. See Wang Chengwen 王承文, *Dunhuang gu Lingbao jing yu Jin Tang Daojiao* 敦煌古靈寶經與晉唐道教 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2002), 113–18; Nakajima Ryuzō 中島隆藏, *Rikuchō shisō no kenkyū* 六朝思想の研究 (Kyoto: Heirakuji shoten, 1985).
5. Stephen R. Bokenkamp, "The Silkworm and the Bodhi Tree: The Lingbao Attempt to Replace Buddhism in China and Our Attempt to Place Lingbao Daoism," in *Religion and Chinese Society: Volume 1, Ancient and Medieval China*, ed. John Lagerwey (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2004), 317–39.
6. Robert Ford Campany, "On the Very Idea of Religions (in the Modern West and in Early Medieval China)," *History of Religions* 42, no. 4 (2003): 287–319.
7. Stephen R. Bokenkamp, "Sources of the *Ling-pao* Scriptures," in *Tantric and Taoist Studies*, ed. Michel Strickmann (Brussels: *Mélanges chinois*

et bouddhiques, XXI, Institut Belge des Hautes Études Chinoises, 1983), Vol. 2, 434–86.

8. See *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1973), 84.2785.
9. Michel Strickmann, "The Consecration S tra: A Buddhist Book of Spells," in *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha,* ed. Robert E. Buswell Jr. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), 75–118; see especially 97–100.
10. Translated in Stephen R. Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 149–85.
11. See *Early Daoist Scriptures*, 173, line 15b, and the footnote to this passage.
12. Zürcher, "Buddhist Influence," 129.
13. Divided into three groups of sixty, the list has come down to us in incomplete form. The first group contains only forty-seven transgressions. The *Wushang miyao* 無上秘要 citation of this passage has forty-eight transgressions in the first group, but the additional item seems only an expansion of the one preceding. It divides the crime of "deceiving fellow students [of the Dao]" into two: "deceiving fellow students" and "deceiving common folk." (Compare HY 456, 24a8 to HY 1130, 44.3b8–9.) Given the repetitious nature of the list, this does not necessarily rule out the possibility that the *Wushang miyao* preserves more of the original text. Given their textual identity, we can, however, safely treat the two textual representations as one. A flawed translation of this list can be found in Livia Kohn, ed., *The Taoist Experience: An Anthology* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 100–106.
14. On the 180 Precepts, see Maeda Shigeki 前田繁樹, "*Rōkun setsu ippyakuhachijū kai jo* no seiritsu ni tsuite" 『老君說一百八十戒序』の成立について, *Tōyō no shisō to shūkyō* 東洋の思想と宗教, 2 (1985): 81–94; Hans-Hermann Schmidt, "Die Hundertachtzig Vorschriften von Lao-chün," in Gert Naundorf, Karl-Heinz Pohl, and Hans-Hermann Schmidt, eds., *Religion und Philosphie in Ostasien: Festschrift für Hans Steininger zum 65 Geburtstag* (Würzburg: Könighausen & Neumann, 1985): 149–59; Benjamin Penny, "Buddhism and Daoism in *The 180 Precepts Spoken by Lord Lao*," *Taoist Resources* 6, no. 2 (August 1996): 1–16. There is a full translation of the text in Barbara Hendrischke and Benjamin Penny, "*The 180 Precepts Spoken by Lord Lao*: A Translation and Textual Study," *Taoist Resources* 6, no. 2 (August 1996): 17–29.
15. HY 456, 31a–31b.
16. Terry F. Kleeman, "The Structuring of Reality in Daoist Moral Codes," Paper presented at the Conference on Religious Thought and Lived Religion in China, Vancouver, B.C., September 14–15, 2002. Another recent study of this work is Chi-Tim Lai, "The Demon Statutes of Nüqing and the Problem of the Bureaucratization of the Netherworld in Early Heavenly Master Daoism," *T'oung Pao* 88 (2002): 251–81.
17. One survival is the crime of going naked outside, under the light of the "three luminaries" (C.33) or "degrading the three luminaries" (A.46). The

Nüqing Precepts seem to relate this to violations of *heqi* practice. Kleeman translates: "You must not have sexual congress in the open, offending against the Three Luminaries."

18. Kleeman, "Daoist Moral Codes," 4.
19. I here endorse Kleeman's conclusion: "In these provisions we can perceive the degree to which the Daoists felt threatened by the mainstream of popular religious practice and the attraction of competing new religious movements."
20. The transgressions of the "Precepts of the Three Primes" 三元品戒 are divided into three groups of sixty. I have designated the three groups A, B, and C. The following number gives the location in each group.
21. Michel Strickmann, "The Mao Shan Revelations: Taoism and the Aristocracy," *T'oung Pao* 63 (1977): 22–30 and "The Consecration Sūtra," 93–94.
22. The term used is *daohu* 道戶. This might mean "hall of worship" as well as "oratory."
23. Since the influential work of Kobayashi Masayoshi 小林正美 in his *Rikuchū dōkyōshi kenkyū* 六朝道教史研究 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1990), scholars have contended that the Lingbao scriptures were composed by different "schools" of Daoism at various times; so it is important to emphasize that the two scriptures outlining the fates of the unfortunate dead I treat here present, in almost identical words, the transgressions found in the *Precepts of the Three Primes*. Thus, regardless of authorship, the Lingbao scriptures show a remarkable consistency of doctrine. For a critique of Kobayashi's treatment of the Lingbao scriptures, see my "The Prehistory of Laozi: His prior career as a woman in the Lingbao Scriptures," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 14 (2004): 403–21.
24. HY 455, 7a4–8. Compare HY 1400, 9b8–10a1.
25. See Robert Ford Campany, *To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth: A Translation and Study of Ge Hong's Traditions of Divine Transcendents* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 94–97.
26. Rolf A. Stein, "Religious Taoism and Popular Religion from the Second to the Seventh Centuries," in *Facets of Taoism: Essays in Chinese Religion,* ed. Welch and Seidel (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 53–81, and Peter Nickerson, "Taoism, Death, and Bureaucracy in Early Medieval China," (PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1996).
27. HY 455, 8a4–10. Compare HY 1400, 10b4–8.
28. HY 1400, 8b–13b. The specific references are to: (1) attacking masters and teachers (攻伐師主); (2) slandering and attacking the worthy (謗擊賢人); (3) cutting off and seizing goods from the four assemblies (priests and devotees, male and female) (割奪四輩); (4) separating others (and themselves?) from offspring and relatives (離人種親, 分隔骨肉); (5) cursing the virtuous and calling on spirits and demons (咒詛善人, 叫喚神鬼); (6) destroying the scriptures and teachings and degrading the celestial Perfected (毀滅經教, 穢辱天真); (7) not keeping faith with the Great Law;

not respecting the spirits (不信大法, 不敬神明); (8) judging and appraising the four assemblies; attacking heavenly beings (評詳四輩, 攻擊天人); (9) degrading Daoists (誹笑道士); (10) none (robbery); (11) none (thieving); (12) none (hunting); (13) assessing the way and its powers; degrading celestial Perfected (評論道德, 毀辱天真); (14) being remiss in the practice of the Dao; slandering and destroying scriptures and teachings (毀慢道法, 謗毀經教).

29. On the function of *yuan* as "commitments" distributing the merit of a religious act, see my "The Silkworm and the Bodhi Tree."
30. HY 1400, 38a9-b1.
31. The centrality of deceased family members in the minds of those who performed such acts of merit is attested in the earliest material evidence of Lingbao devotionalism so far discovered, the Yao Boduo 姚伯多 stele of 490 CE. See Stephen R. Bokenkamp, "The Yao Boduo Stele as Evidence for the 'Dao-Buddhism' of the Early *Lingbao* Scriptures," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 9 (1996–1997): 54–67.
32. Kristofer Schipper, "*Dongxuan lingbao changye zhi fu jiuyou yugui mingzhen ke*," in *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang*, ed. Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 1: 225.
33. On the Lingbao scriptures' "prediction" concerning their own release to the world, see Bokenkamp, "Sources of the *Ling-pao* Scriptures," 439. At the time I wrote that article, I thought that the "gentleman-devotee of benevolent heart who will delight in the Dao" might be Ge Hong. The reference might equally be a self-reference by Ge Chaofu. But, even if the former is meant, the scriptures remained with the Ge family until their release around 400 CE.
34. Stephen R. Bokenkamp, *Ancestors and Anxiety: Daoism and the Birth of Rebirth in China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).
35. HY 455, 3b8–9.
36. HY 1400, 9b2.
37. Stephen F. Teiser, *The Ghost Festival in Medieval China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).
38. Gregory Schopen, "Filial Piety and the Monk in the Practice of Indian Buddhism: A Question of 'Sinicization' Viewed from the Other Side," in *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks: Collected Papers on the Archeology, Epigraphy, and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), 56–71 and Reiko Ohnuma, *Dehadāna: The 'Gift of the Body' in Indian Buddhist Narrative Literature* (PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 1997).
39. Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 32.
40. Michel Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 13.
41. Michel Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine*, 10–50. Strickmann does

write that "it is not as if the two 'karmas,' Indian and Chinese, were ever entirely distinct in Chinese life" (46), but the thrust of his analysis foregrounds the dichotomy. Other analysts are not so subtle. Maeda Shigeki, for instance, portrays the Lingbao deployment of some of the ideas we have been discussing a "Mahayanist solution." See his *Shoki Dōkyō kyōten no keisei* 初期道教經典の形成 (Tokyo: Kyūkoshoin, 2004), 407. For him, any deviation from canonical Buddhist doctrines of retribution found in Chinese texts is a "slip" (*rakusa* 落差).

42. In fact, for some time there has been a thriving scholarly trade in articles pointing out how Chinese Buddhists "failed to understand" Indic concepts of rebirth until Kumārajīva came along to set them straight.
43. An influential Lingbao passage on this question holds that, in the present fallen age, those who illicitly make oaths that take their ancestors as warranty have led celestial administrators to hold the living culpable for the sins of the dead. See Bokenkamp, *Ancestors and Anxiety*, ch. 6.

8

What is *Geyi*, After All?

Victor H. Mair

A constant theme of nearly all introductory and general expositions of the history of Buddhism, be they composed in the East or in the West, be they presented in the classroom or in written works, is that the presumed translation technique of *geyi* 格義 played a central role in the transmission and assimilation of Indian Buddhism in China during its earliest phases. According to this scenario, *geyi* (usually rendered in English as "matching concepts" or "matching meanings") served to pair Sanskrit Buddhist terms with Sinitic Daoist terms. The ubiquity of this explanation in textbooks, handbooks, encyclopedias, Web-based resources, articles, monographs, and so on is astonishing when one begins to look at the historical evidence used to support it: there is next to nothing.

In this chapter, it will be shown that *geyi*, as now understood, is a thoroughly modern construction. The first thing that must be done is to gather all of the available references to *geyi*, both inside and outside the Buddhist canon, then translate and annotate each one of these references in context. From this investigation, it emerges clearly that *geyi* had nothing whatsoever to do with translation, but that it was instead a highly ephemeral and not-very-successful attempt on the part of a small number of Chinese teachers to cope with the flood of numbered lists of categories, ideas, and so forth (of which Indian thinkers were so much enamored) that came to China in the wake of Buddhism.

A secondary aspect of this inquiry is to demonstrate how what was originally an exegetical technique of circumscribed application and limited duration developed into a key element of Chinese Buddhist historiography. It will be possible to trace the growth of *geyi* from an inefficacious interpretive strategy into a supposed translational method

and philosophical approach that occurred during the course of the last century. This delineation, however, is essentially a side issue. The main purpose of this study is simply to set the record straight about what *geyi* really was and was not at the time of its actual existence. In the process of doing so, new materials that have heretofore never been cited in the protracted discussions on *geyi* will be introduced, and old sources will be revisited and thoroughly scrutinized.

Fundamental Semantics

Starting from the second half of the twentieth century and still adhered to today, the standard English translation of *geyi* is "matching concepts" or "matching meanings." This rendering conforms well with the scenario of *geyi* as an essential component of the means whereby Indian Buddhist texts were translated into Chinese. Unfortunately, "matching meanings/concepts" is an inaccurate rendition of *geyi*. There is no serious problem with the second syllable ("meanings" or "concepts"), but rendering *ge* as "matching" falls wide of the mark.

The fact that *ge* is written with a wood radical gives us a hint of its basic denotation, viz., lattice, which signifies a structure of crossed wooden strips arranged to form a pattern of rectangular, square, or diagonal open spaces between the lines. From this is derived the notion of *gezi* 格子 ("square" or "checked"), as in *gezi zhi* 格子紙 (the sort of paper on which one writes *hanzi* 漢字 ["sinograms"]). In linguistics, *ge* can refer to grammatical case, and *ge* is also used in some advanced types of mathematical logic, geometry, set theory, algebra, and combinatorial mathematics where it renders the English term *lattice*. Another telling term formed with *ge* as a constituent morpheme is *gelü* 格律. This is a technical term in traditional Chinese poetics that refers to such aspects of verse as the number of syllables per line, antithesis, parallelism, and rhyme. These poetic features are governed by prosodic rules that can be thought of as determined by the *gezi*-like structure of Chinese regulated verse.

Perhaps the easiest way to think of how these fundamental facets of *ge* relate to the problem of *geyi* is to visualize a set of pigeonholes and contemplate its function as a device for the classification of discrete items. From classification, it is only a short step to categorization, which is precisely what the *ge* of *geyi* signifies.

Axel Schuessler states that the graph *ge* 格 was used to write at least three different Sinitic etyma meaning "rack," "tree branch," and "to come, go to" (the latter originally written without the wood radical).[1]

The first and second etyma evidently have to do with wood (as signified by the radical), and the first provides the basis for the evolved meanings of "lattice," etc.

In *Hanyu da cidian* 漢語大詞典 (4.989b-991a), the graph 格 has four different Modern Standard Mandarin (MSM) pronunciations (*gé*, *luò*, *gē*, *hè*, plus an additional two embedded pronunciations [*lù, hé*]) with a total of forty-two (38+2+1+1) definitions. *Hanyu da zidian* 漢語大字典 (2.1203b-1205a) gives the same four MSM pronunciations (plus the same two additional embedded pronunciations) for a total of thirty-three (29+2+1+1) definitions. Despite the plethora of definitions for this single graph, neither of these authoritative works offers a justification for rendering it as "matching" (the closest they come is "to oppose [an enemy]," but that is too remote to justify translating *geyi* as "matching meanings").

Most dictionaries of Modern Chinese (i.e., MSM) give some or all of the following definitions for *ge* alone, and more or less in the order listed:[2] square/compartment/check/chequer (formed by crossed lines); lattice, grid; division; standard, pattern, rule; character, manner, style; impede, obstruct, resist, bar (designated by some dictionaries as a literary usage); hit, beat, fight; investigate, examine; case (grammatical). The majority of these meanings can be directly or indirectly derived from the basic idea of a compartmentalized wooden framework in which sections are blocked off. No dictionaries, whether of Literary or Modern Chinese, give "matching" or "pairing" as a definition for *ge*. There is thus no lexicographical warrant for the currently ubiquitous translation of *geyi* as "matching meanings." We must conclude, therefore, that "matching" is simply an *ad hoc*, unsubstantiated rendering of the graph devised by modern scholars perplexed by its occurrence in the shadowy expression *geyi*.

The present investigation emphasizes philology over philosophy, particularly since many researchers leap into the *geyi* fray as though it were strictly a matter of intellectual history and without taking into serious account the very difficult linguistic problems surrounding this vexed term. Our inquiry needs to be solidly based on the available evidence, so the first order of business is to take stock of all the relevant texts in which the term *geyi* appears.

Primary Evidence

In actuality, it might be better to label this section "Lack of Primary Evidence," because there is not much. One would think that, for such

an allegedly vital translation technique as *geyi*, which supposedly enabled Buddhism to gain a foothold in China during the Eastern Han period and succeeding age, it would be unmistakably prominent in texts from the second century and later. If that is what one assumes, one will be sadly disappointed. In the whole of the Buddhist canon, the term *geyi* occurs fewer than two dozen times, and many of these instances are repetitions of each other. Thus far, I have not been able to find a single instance of *geyi* anywhere in the Daoist canon, including compendia such as *Wushang biyao* 無上祕要 (Essentials of unsurpassed arcana; around 580), *Daojiao yishu* 道教義樞 (The pivotal meaning of Daoist doctrine; early eighth century), and *Yunji qiqian* 雲笈七籤 (Cloudy bookcase with seven labels; ca. 1028). Nor is *geyi* to be found anywhere in the massive twenty-five official histories. Similarly, it is not in *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 (Comprehensive mirror for aid in government; 1084) or *Xu Zizhi tongjian* 續資治通鑑 (Comprehensive mirror for aid in government, continued; 1801). There is not a single occurrence of *geyi* in the entirety of the massive *Gujin tushu jicheng* 古今圖書集成 (Assemblage of books and illustrations past and present; 1728). There are no independent instances of *geyi* in the enormous *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書 (Complete writings in the four repositories; 1771–1781) or in the comprehensive CHANT (CHinese ANcient Texts) database maintained by the Chinese University of Hong Kong.[3] It would appear that, after a few fleeting mentions during the Wei-Jin period (late third to fourth centuries), the term *geyi* was almost totally obliterated from Chinese intellectual discourse and consciousness until the twentieth century.[4]

Significantly, *geyi* does not appear in *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語 (A new account of tales of the world; ca. 430) by the Liu-Song prince, Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403–444). If *geyi* were a notable feature of Eastern Jin intellectual life, it would almost certainly have been mentioned in *Shishuo xinyu*. Therefore, it is crucial to determine precisely what *geyi* did imply during the short span of time when it was current among a small group of Buddhist teachers.

The primary and single most important document for the study of the history of *geyi* is the biographical account of Zhu Faya 竺法雅 (latter half of the third century and the first half of the fourth century, i.e., the Western Jin [265–316] and the early part of the Eastern Jin [317–420]). Since, in the lengthy debates on the subject, it has never been rendered in its entirety, it will be worth the effort to provide an integral translation with extensive annotation.

> (Zhu)[5] Faya[6] was a man of Hejian.[7] He was of a staid, tolerant disposition. As a youth, he excelled at non-Buddhist[8] studies, and

> when he grew up he became proficient in Buddhist doctrine.[9] The sons of gentry families all attached themselves to him and requested that he teach them. At that time, the adherents who followed him were uniformly well-versed in secular works, but did not yet excel in Buddhist principles. Consequently, (Zhu Fa)ya, with Kang[10] Falang and others, correlated the enumerations of items (*shishu* 事數) in the sutras with non-Buddhist writings[11] as instances of lively[12] explication; this was called "categorizing concepts" (*geyi*). Thereupon, Vibhū (?), Tanxiang,[13] and others also debated over the categorized concepts in order to instruct their disciples. (Zhu Fa)ya's manner was unrestrained and he excelled (in getting at) the crux (of the matter). He alternately lectured on secular works and Buddhist sutras. With Dao'an and Fatai,[14] he often explained the doubtful points they had assembled, and together they exhausted the essentials of the sutras.
> 法雅, 河間人, 凝正有器度。少善外學, 長通佛義。衣冠士子咸附諮稟。時依門徒并世典有功, 未善佛理。 雅乃與康法朗等以經中事數擬配外書, 為生解之例, 謂之格義。乃毘浮、曇相等, 亦辯格義以訓門徒。雅風采灑落, 善于樞機。外典佛經遞互講說, 與道安、法汰每披釋湊疑, 共盡經要。

> Later, he established a monastery at Gaoyi,[15] where he tirelessly taught a *saṅgha*-fellowship of more than a hundred. One of (Zhu Fa)ya's disciples, Tanxi, emulated his master in excelling at discourse, and was honored by Shi Xuan, heir apparent to the throne of the Latter Zhao [319–351].
> 後立寺於高邑, 僧眾百餘, 訓誘無懈。雅弟子曇習祖述先師, 善於言論, 為偽趙太子右[石]宣所敬云。[16]

A key to understanding this much-discussed, but poorly understood, text is the expression "enumeration of items" (*shishu*) that occurs in the middle of it. There are several reasons why a thorough comprehension of *shishu* is crucial in this investigation, among them the fact that it is characterized as a type of explication (not translation) and, still more vitally, because it is directly related to *geyi*. Fortunately, we have a roughly contemporaneous, authoritative definition of *shishu* in the form of a passage in the fifty-ninth section of the "Wen xue" 文學 (Letters and scholarship) chapter of *Shishuo xinyu* and a valuable commentary on it by the Liang scholar and bibliophile, Liu Jun 劉峻 (*zi* Xiaobiao 孝標, 462–521). Before presenting the passage in question, it should be noted that *Shishuo xinyu* is celebrated for its intimate familiarity with the intellectual, religious, and social life of the Eastern Jin, the very period in which *geyi* abruptly arose and rapidly disappeared.

> When Yin Hao[17] was dismissed and transferred to Dongyang,[18] he read a large number of Buddhist sutras, gaining a detailed understanding of them all. It was only when he came to places where items were enumerated that he did not understand. [Afterwards,] when he met a monk, he asked about [the items] he had noted down, and then they were all resolved.
> 殷中軍被廢, 徙東陽, 大讀佛經, 皆精解; 唯至事數處不解。遇見一道 人, 問所籤, 便釋然。[19]

Liu Jun's commentary on this passage gives a half-dozen specific examples of exactly what *shishu* signified:

> *Shishu* means categories such as: the Five Personality components/aggregates (*pañcaskandha*),[20] the Twelve Entrances (*dvādaśāyatanāni*),[21] the Four Truths (*catvāri ārya-satyāni*),[22] the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination (*dvādaśaṅga pratītyasamutpāda*)[23], the Five Sense-organs (*pañcendriyāni*),[24] the Five Powers (*pañca balāni*),[25] and the Seven Factors of Enlightenment (*sapta bodhyangāṅi*).[26]
> 事數謂若五陰、十二入、四諦、十二因緣、五根、五力、七覺之屬。

Aside from all of this invaluable testimony from *Shishuo xinyu* and its main commentary, it is also pertinent to note that *shishu* may be equated with *fashu* 法數 (which is linked to Sanskrit *dharma-paryāya* ["formulaic terms of the dharma," usually translated in Chinese as *famen* 法門 and generally signifying "text/discourse on dharma"] in the *Mahāvyutpatti* [see below]) or *mingshu* 名數 ("Buddhist terms that begin with a number," i.e., numerical groups of related items).[27] These are numerical categories of Buddhist doctrine such as the three realms, five *skandha*s, five regions, four dogmas, six paths, twelve *nidāna*s, etc.[28] Equipping ourselves with unequivocal information about *shishu*, we can feel a much greater degree of confidence in our comprehension of *geyi*.

It is obvious that *shishu* was a Buddhist technical term of the time and that people were well aware of precisely what it signified when they employed it. Since *shishu* unmistakably means the enumeration of items or matters pertaining to Buddhist doctrine, then we may conclude that *geyi* (which is equated with *shishu* in the biographical sketch of Zhu Faya) was not a translation technique at all but an exegetical method, and that it was by no means restricted exclusively to drawing upon Daoist texts for its non-Buddhist (i.e., non-Indian, non-Indic) comparanda. The raison d'être of *geyi* was its dedication to the explica-

tion of the countless (!) lists of complicated technical terms that are so characteristic of Indian philosophy, but which are so rare in traditional (i.e., pre-Buddhist) East Asian thought. In short, *geyi*'s fundamental purpose was the correlation of lists of enumerated Buddhist concepts with presumably comparable lists of notions extracted from non-Buddhist works. The inherent fallacy of such an approach is manifest in the contradiction between the ubiquity of such lists (often lengthy) in Buddhist texts and their rarity (usually very short) in non-Buddhist texts. There clearly were not enough numbered lists in non-Buddhist texts to go around!

One can easily imagine why the *shishu* would have given Chinese Buddhists of the late third and early fourth centuries so much trouble. Everywhere one turns in Indian philosophy and practice, and that includes Buddhist philosophy and practice, there are longer and shorter lists of technical terms to contend with. The individual terms by themselves are often difficult enough to comprehend. When they are bundled together in groups, they become all the harder to grasp. For those like the early Chinese Buddhists of the Jin period, whose native traditions of thought and praxis were unaccustomed to drawing up such lists of complicated terminology, the experience of encountering the *shishu* must have been mind-numbing. No wonder that even someone such as Yin Hao, who dedicated the last years of his life to Buddhism, would be stymied by the *shishu*.

In a word, *geyi* was no more or no less than an ephemeral, abortive attempt on the part of Zhu Faya and a few of his close associates to ease the frustration their students felt upon encountering the *shishu*. *Geyi* was a short-lived phenomenon, as it was roundly repudiated by the very next generation of Chinese Buddhist teachers under the leadership of Dao'an 道安 (312–385). Thus, *geyi* lasted for no more than a generation and it was restricted to a very small group of persons who experimented with it unsuccessfully for a limited, specific purpose: to lessen the burden of Chinese Buddhists in dealing with numerical lists of concepts and terms.

For someone who is unfamiliar with the pervasive propensity for Indian (and especially Buddhist) philosophers and religionists to resort to drawing up numbered lists for purposes of analysis and teaching, a glance at the *Mahāvyutpatti*, a Sanskrit-Tibetan lexicon of the early ninth century, should suffice to arrive at an appreciation of this aspect of Indian and Buddhist thought. *Mahāvyutpatti* contains 9,565 items classified according to 277 different categories. There are, for example, eighty epithets of the Buddha, eighteen types of emptiness, and eight

kinds of mundane dharmas. Some of the categories have hundreds of entries.

The lexicographical compilation of numbered lists of technical terms began long before the *Mahāvyutpatti*. The *Kośa* of Nāgārjuna (fl. late second century CE) was written in Pali and consists of sections such as the following:

CXXXII	The threefold (fruit of) work.
CXXXIII	The three kinds of magic.
CXXXIV	The eight untimely ways of being born.[29]

Under each section, the various items referred to are listed.

The Indian (and Buddhist) delight in such numbered lists proved to be a nightmare for their Chinese followers. Indeed, a major source of the tension over the issue of Sinicization versus Indianization (i.e., adaptation and flexibility versus authority and faithfulness) derived from having to deal with a flood of bewildering Sanskrit technical terminology. Grouping these unfamiliar terms into numbered categories only made them all the more forbidding.

It is significant that the Chinese translation of Sāṃkhya (or Sāṅkhya) was simply *shu* 數,[30] since Sāṃkhya is the Indian philosophical tradition whose name has been variously defined as "enumeration," "investigation," "analysis," viz., "of the categories [N.B.] of the phenomenal world."[31] Further indication of the importance of numerical categorization for Buddhist thought in particular and for Indian philosophy in general are the *shulun* 數論 ("numerical treatises"). These were the *śāstra*s of the Sarvāṅstivādins and were also a method of Sāṃkhya philosophy whereby all concepts were placed within twenty-five categories.

Another way to comprehend the meaning of *shu* for early Chinese Buddhists is to consider the term *chanshu* 禪數 (literally, "Chan/Zen numbers"). It occurs in Dao'an's preface to the *Anban shouyi jing* 安般守意經 (*Ānāpana-smṛti-sūtra*), translated by An Shigao 安世高, and refers to the enumerated categories concerning *dhyāna* ("meditation, concentration") (*T.*55 [2145] 43c20). The *Ānāpana-smṛti-sūtra* is an Abhidharma scripture, and An Shigao—the first major translator of Buddhist texts into Chinese—was a specialist in Abhidharma ("higher doctrine," i.e., the scholastic analysis of religious teachings), who concentrated on the translation of meditation texts.[32] Inasmuch as Abhidharma is permeated with lists of concepts and is particularly devoted to exposition by division and subdivision, we can see how pervasive this challenging aspect of Buddhist doctrine was for the Chinese right from the very beginning.

In sum, the *shu* of *shishu* means "(analytical) enumerative categories." *Shishu*, then, indicates "enumerative categories (or categorized enumeration) of things/items, i.e., (technical) terms." Therefore, *geyi*—which is explicitly defined by Huijiao 慧皎 ([497–554] in the biography of Zhu Faya) as the correlation of *shishu* from Buddhist scriptures with comparable material from non-Buddhist (not necessarily Daoist) sources—has to do with enumerated categories of technical matters. This is the most authoritative explanation of *geyi* from the earliest source in which it was mentioned. Since *geyi* was such a short-lived phenomenon (it was already rejected by Dao'an by the middle of the fourth century in his conversation with Sengxian [see below] and was only initiated earlier in the same century by Zhu Faya and his associates),[33] it did not have time to develop into something more elaborate or important, as is often imagined by modern interpreters.

Much has been made of the fact that Huiyuan 慧遠 (334–416), the important precursor of the Pure Land schools of Buddhism and Dao'an's chief disciple, on one occasion referred to the early Daoist thinker, Zhuangzi:

> When he was twenty-four [357 CE], Huiyuan began to lecture. Once there was a guest who, listening to Huiyuan's lecture, raised objections about the concept of ultimate reality.[34] The discussion went back and forth for quite some time, with the guest becoming all the more confused. Thus, Huiyuan drew upon a concept from *Zhuangzi* as an analogy. Thereupon, the deluded one came to understand. After that, Dao'an especially permitted Huiyuan not to abandon secular writings.
> 年二十四便就講說。嘗有客聽講，難實相義，往復移時，彌增疑昧。遠乃引《莊子》義為連類。於是惑者曉然。是後安公特聽慧遠不廢俗書。(*GZ* 6, *T.*50 [2059] 358a11–14)

The rather awkward wording of the last part of the final sentence implies that it was normal "to abandon secular writings," while the first part indicates that Huiyuan was given a special privilege in this regard, whereas other disciples were most likely encouraged to concentrate exclusively on Buddhist texts. Regardless of what one may think of Huiyuan's invocation of the *Zhuangzi* in this particular instance, it is irrelevant to the question of *geyi*, which—as we have seen unmistakably above—is a separate matter. Furthermore, by the time of Huiyuan's allusion to *Zhuangzi* (in the year 357), Dao'an had already repudiated *geyi*, as is evident in the following paragraph. Therefore, the frequent citation of this passage from Huiyuan's biography in support of the

allegation that *geyi* was a technique used by Buddhists for borrowing from Daoism is completely fallacious.

When Dao'an was living together with Sengxian 僧先 (or Sengguang 僧光)[35] on Feilong Shan ("Flying Dragon Mountain")[36] around 349,[37]

> (Dao)'an said, "The old 'categorized concepts' (*geyi*) of the past was often at odds with Buddhist principles." "We ought to analyze [the texts] carefreely,"[38] said Sengxian. "How are we permitted to dispute our predecessors?" (Dao)'an said, "In spreading and praising the [Buddhist] principles and doctrines, we should make them fitting and proper. When dharma-drums[39] compete to resound, what [does it matter who comes] first [and who comes] later?"
> 安曰:「先舊格義於理多違。」 先曰:「且當分折逍遙, 何容是非先達?」安曰:「弘贊理教, 宜令允愜, 法鼓競鳴, 何先何後?」*(GZ 5, T.50* [2059] 355a25–28)

Judging from this brief and somewhat enigmatic exchange with Sengxian, Dao'an was opposed to *geyi* because it distorted Buddhist teachings. Furthermore, he did not stand in awe of *geyi* simply because a few earlier teachers had employed it for a brief spell.

Another monk from Henan who criticized *geyi* was Sengrui 僧叡 (352–436) in his *Pimoluojieti jing yishu xu* 毘摩羅詰堤經義疏序 (Preface to a commentary on the *Vimalakīrti-sūtra*):

> Since the Wind of Wisdom fanned eastward and the Word of the Dharma flowed forth in song, although it may be said that there were places [set up] for lecturing, the categorizing of concepts [employed in them] was pedantic and at odds with the original [sense of the Indian texts being discussed]; the Six Schools [of Prajñāpāramita] were biased and did not touch [the truth]. As for the fundamental doctrine of the emptiness of nature (*prakāńti-śūnyata*),[40] examined from the vantage of today, it comes closest to grasping the actuality [of Prajñāpāramita].
> 自慧風東扇, 法言流詠已來, 雖曰講肆, 格義迂而乖本, 六家偏而不即。 性空之宗, 以今驗之, 最得其實然。(*CSJ* 4, *T.55* [2145] 59a1–4)

It is evident that, approximately a century after its rise and demise, the opposition to *geyi* had been cemented among the most important Buddhist exponents of the age. By the end of the fourth century and the beginning of the fifth century, *geyi* had already long since ceased to exist as a functioning device, and—even in memory—it was thought of with opprobrium. Certainly there were none at this time who advocated, much less adopted, *geyi*.

A text that is often cited in discussions of *geyi* is the following passage from the "Yuyi lun" 喻疑論 (Treatise on the clarification of doubts) by Huirui 慧叡, a disciple of the renowned Kumārajīva (344/350–409/413; arrived in Chang'an in 401):

> At the end of the Han and the beginning of the Wei [i.e., ca. 220 CE], the chancellor of Guangling and the chancellor of Pengcheng joined the Order, and both were able to maintain the great light [of the Doctrine].[41] The worthies who sought the essence [of Buddhist ideas] for the first time had fixed lecturing places. But they puffed up [their lectures] with copious concepts and made them pedantic with their paired explanations.
> 漢末魏初, 廣陵、彭城二相出家, 并能任持大照。尋味之賢始有講次, 而恢之以裕義, 迂之以配說。(*CSJ* 5; *T.55* [2145] 41b10–12)

It is only the Ming edition of the text that has the variant *geyi* for *yuyi* 裕義 (not to be confused with the title of the treatise). The earlier, majority reading of *yuyi*, however, fits better because it complements *hui* 恢 ("extensive, vast," translated here as "puffed up"). This reading also goes well with the following, parallel clause, which seems to be criticizing circuitous redundancy and repetition. Consequently, this passage most likely has nothing to do with *geyi*. However, even if we adopt the late variant, this passage would have to be said to display a decidedly negative attitude toward *geyi*. Furthermore, we must note that it dates to roughly two centuries after the time that it is commenting upon.[42]

From Sengyou's 僧佑 (445–518) biography of Kumārajīva himself we have the following telling and oft-repeated passage:

> Since the Great Law covered the east, beginning in [the time] of Emperor Ming [58–75] of the [Later] Han and passing through the Wei [220–265] and the Jin [265–420], the [translated] *sūtra*s (scriptures) and *śāstra*s (treatises) that were produced gradually became numerous. Yet the [translations] produced by Zhi (Qian) and Zhu (Fahu)[43] mostly [were plagued by] stagnant wording[44] and categorized concepts.
> 自大法東被始於漢明, 歷涉魏晉經論漸多, 而支、竺所出多滯文格義。(*CSJ* 14, *T.55* [2145] 101b13–15; copied [with a couple of minor variants] in *GZ* 2, *T.50* [2059] 332a27–28)

Judging from its parallelism with *zhi*, *ge* here was probably intended to mean "obstruct, block, confine, restrict," and so forth. Yet, even in this

case it may be said to function as an extension of the basic meaning of "compartment(alize)."

Although Sengyou, the compiler of *CSJ*, uses *geyi* to chastise translators that he clearly disapproves of, he seems to have only a vague understanding of the term, since it originally was not a translation technique but a method of exegesis (one that was, furthermore, restricted to the explication of numbered lists). As a matter of fact, Sengyou's complaint against Zhi Qian 支謙 (fl. 220–252) and Dharmarakṣa (Zhu Fahu 竺法護, ca. 233–310) was almost certainly derived from Sengzhao's 僧肇 (374–414) *Weimojie jing xu* 維摩詰經序 (Preface to the *Vimalakīrti-sūtra*), where the wording is as follows: "detested [translations] produced by Zhi and Zhu as causing principles to stagnate in their texts (理滯於文), and often feared that abstruse precepts [i.e., Buddhist doctrines] would founder at the hands of the translators," with no allusion to *geyi* (*CSJ* 8, *T.55* [2145] 58b9–10). The addition of *geyi* to *zhiwen* 滯文 as another supposed defect of the translations of Zhi Qian and Dharmarakṣa was thus due to Sengyou, writing approximately a century after Sengzhao, and more than a century and a half after the time of Zhu Faya, apparently the chief exponent of *geyi*.

Sengyou's censure of the translations of Zhi Qian and Dharmarakṣa as being *zhiwen geyi* is repeated verbatim by the following:

Daolang 道朗 (Eastern Jin) *CSJ* 14, *T.55* (2145) 101b13–15[45]
Huixiang 慧祥 (fl. 667) *T.51* (2067) 15b9–10
Daoshi 道世 (d. 683) *T.53* (2122) 474b16–17
Zhisheng 智昇 (ca. 669–740) *T.55* (2154) 514c13–15
Yuanzhao 圓照 (fl. 778) *T.55* (2157) 811c3–4

None of these authors add anything that would help us better comprehend the nature or significance of *geyi*. The last-named author, a specialist in *vinaya*, elsewhere uses the expression *geyi* for the literal signification of its two graphs and not in the specialized technical sense that it had during the early Jin period (viz., explaining the *shishu* ["enumerations of items"]): "Was it only because he categorized the concepts of the nine divisions that he was renowned?" 豈惟格義九 [illegible]，獨擅名哉—referring to an analytical approach said to have been devised by Kumārajīva's disciple Sengrui 僧叡, who consequently came to be known as the Nine Divisions Dharma Master 九轍法師, although this method was actually created by an earlier Wei-Jin period monk named Daorong 道融 and that it only came to be attributed to Sengrui through confusion (*T.55* [2157] 895c9).

The versatile and prolific monk Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667), compiler of *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (Further biographies of eminent monks) and *Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集 (Expanded collection for the propagation of the light), twice mentions *geyi* in the context of textual obfuscation (*T*.40 [1804] 97b10; *T*.45 [1895] 840a8). It would appear that Daoxuan viewed *geyi* as a faulty type of explication, although he too provided no details concerning the way it operated. Elsewhere, he states unmistakably that Dao'an strove to extirpate the *geyi* of the past and to open up spiritual principles (*shenli* 神理) for the future (*T*.50 [2060] 548b2).

The leader of the Three Treatises (Sanlun 三論) School, Jizang 吉藏 (born into a family of Parthian origin, 549–623), four times repeats the identical set of paired clauses: "Categorized concepts were pedantic and went against the fundament; the Six [Prajñā] Schools were biased and off the mark" (格義迂而乖本，六家偏而未即) (*T*.42 [1824] 4c11, 29a7–8; *T*.42 [1825] 174a12–13, 183a2). Jizang twice prefaces these remarks with reference to the flourishing of lecture sites for the propagation of Buddhism and once mentions that all of this took place before the advent of Kumārajīva, who translated the three *śāstra*s that formed the basis for Jizang's brand of Madhyamaka. While it is evident that Jizang was dissatisfied with *geyi*, as he was with the Six *Prajñā* Schools of the Eastern Jin period, he does not provide any specific information that would indicate how it functioned.

In his syncretic volume entitled *Beishan lu* 北山錄 [A record of North Mountain], the late Tang monk, Shenqing 神清 (d. ca. 820), repeated from *GZ* 4 the account of Zhu Faya resorting to *geyi* in his lectures (*T*.52 [2113] 595a7–9). Shenqing makes, however, a couple of curious—and revealing—modifications. Where the original text reads "endeavored to correlate the enumerations of items (*shishu*) in the sutras with non-Buddhist writings as instances of lively explication; this was called 'categorizing concepts (*geyi*),'" Shenqing writes, "endeavored to discuss Confucian writings (*rushu* 儒書) with the classifications of concepts in the sutras as instances of lively explication; this was called *geyi*." Further, in the next sentence, Shenqing writes that this was done "to instruct their students" (*menxue* 門學) instead of "to instruct their disciples" (*mentu* 門徒), and completely omits the clause about Vibhū (?), Tanxiang, and the others. The story about Zhu Faya must have seemed altogether strange and distant to Shenqing and his eleventh-century commentator, Huibao 慧寶, who made no attempt to clarify this opaque passage.

A Buddhist lexicon from the first half of the eleventh century alludes to *geyi* in such an oddly garbled fashion that the compiler, Daocheng 道

誠 (fl. 1019), seems to have been confused about its true meaning. To show how badly rewritten this entry of the lexicon is, it will be useful to cite the relevant portions of the original account on which it was based: 法雅…少善外學，長通佛義。衣冠士子咸附諮稟…。以經中事數擬配外書。為生解之例，謂之格義…(*T*.50 [2059] 347a18–22; translated in full above). In the eleventh-century lexicon, this admittedly somewhat difficult passage is corrupted as follows: 擬書。高僧法雅。善内外學。多俗士咨稟。以經義難解雅。將比擬外書為生解之。例謂之挌義 (*T*.54 [2127] 294a16–18). The compiler manifestly was oblivious of the actual meaning of the reference to *geyi* in the passage concerning Zhu Faya from the *GZ*, so it would be futile to make a serious translation of his entry on *nishu* 擬書. Instead, I shall attempt to replicate its effect in English, warts and all (and ignoring the gross mispunctuations of the *T*. editors):

> Matched writings. The eminent monk Faya excelled at Buddhist and non-Buddhist studies. Many lay scholars requested that he teach them. Given that the meanings in the sutras were difficult to explain, Faya matched them with [those] in non-Buddhist literature in order to provide instances of lively explications. This was called "striking concepts."

Even if we grant that 挌義 in the lexicon is simply a typographical error for 格義,[46] Daocheng has glossed over an essential component (*shishu* 事數) of the original. Perhaps the best light we can put on this corrupted passage is that Daocheng was intentionally attempting to emend (and thus [in his mind] to improve) the original wording of the latter phrase, which has indeed befuddled all scholars who have confronted it. However, in substituting *yi nan jie* 義難解 for *shishu*, Daocheng has eviscerated the passage, leaving it limp and lifeless.

In a short essay on friendship, the Ming monk, Rujin 如巹 (fl. 1470–1489), quotes the Sengxian passage from *GZ* 5 without elaboration and seemingly without a clear understanding of the issues involved, no doubt because he was separated by so many centuries from the time when Huijiao originally wrote it (ca. 530) (*T*.45 [2023] 1047a1).

The much vexed term *geyi* occurs a total of twenty-three times[47] in the entire Buddhist canon. All of the relevant occurrences in *T*. are cited and discussed in this chapter. There are no other pertinent texts containing *geyi* outside of *T*. that are not simply copies of passages in it.

It is clear from the above-cited evidence that *geyi* was a method for coping with the Indian proclivity for numerical lists of ideas and

concepts. From its few occurrences in the Buddhist canon, it is evident that *geyi* was an abortive exegetical method, not a vital translation technique or essential philosophical principle. The main reason we know about *geyi* at all is because the celebrated Eastern Jin monk Dao'an, rightly so, criticized it as ineffective. After the meager series of texts cited above, there is no significant mention of *geyi* until the twentieth century, when it is miraculously revived by modern historians and made to play a key role in the early development of Buddhism in China.

Secondary Evolution

The overwhelming majority of the modern translations and interpretations of *geyi* are partially or totally false. Only a few accurately relate even a portion of what *geyi* really was. Since the vast preponderance of these modern definitions, when measured against the historical data, are self-evidently incorrect, it will not be necessary to comment on them individually. Instead, I will merely cite a few of the more representative figures who have been influential in making the obscure notion of *geyi* into the unjustifiably key term in Buddhist studies that it has become.

So far as I have been able to determine, the first modern scholar to resurrect *geyi* was the celebrated historian, Chen Yinke. Not only was he the one to rescue *geyi* from its richly deserved obscurity, it was he who established the basic nature of the discourse that would be used to discuss it by nearly all scholars who followed in his wake. Chen's groundbreaking study of *geyi* was buried in his tour de force investigation of the little-known figure, Zhi Mindu 支愍度:

> During the Jin era, the scholars who engaged in Pure Conversation (*qingtan* 清談) mostly favored strained comparisons (*bifu* 比附) between Buddhist texts and non-Buddhist writings. What is more, among the monks there was a concrete method called *geyi*. Although the term *geyi* is seldom seen in written records, it was prevalent for a period, and its influence on contemporary thought was profound. . . .[48]

One wonders, if *geyi* is "seldom seen in written records," what evidence Chen can adduce to buttress his bald assertion that it had a profound influence on contemporary thought. A careful reading of his article on the subject reveals that there is precious little, and that most of what he has to say about *geyi* is sheer speculation. Chen's grasping at straws in his allegations of the importance of *geyi* may be seen in a complex

case that he adduces near the end of one of his lectures on the subject.[49] He begins with the Zhulin 竹林 ("Bamboo Grove") of India,[50] to which he adds the mysterious *zuozhe qi ren* 作者七人 ("seven men who acted"—Chen does not tell us who they are) of the *Analects* (14.37). According to Chen this yields the celebrated Zhulin Qi Xian 竹林七賢 ("Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove"), the lively group of third-century bohemian, nonconformist intellectuals, poets, musicians, and tipplers who gathered in the environs of Luoyang. He then proceeds to note that the eclectic Jin poet and thinker,[51] Sun Chuo 孫綽 (314–471), compared the Tianzhu Qi Seng 天竺七僧 ("Seven Monks of India") to the Chinese "Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove." Chen's discussions of *geyi* are filled with this sort of unbridled attribution of practically any syncretic tendencies to this elusive snark. What is still more remarkable, however, is that a scholar of Chen's stature would claim that, not only did *geyi* remain a powerful intellectual force through the Six Dynasties, but Northern Song Neo-Confucianism itself was an outgrowth of *geyi*![52] He even goes on to assert that *geyi* was an essential component for the whole of the history of Chinese philosophy. Given Chen Yinke's enormous prestige, it is not surprising that his uncharacteristically poorly substantiated article and lectures on *geyi* set the tone for all discussions of this topic for the next seven decades.

Chen's lead was taken up in a hugely influential article on *geyi* by Tang Yongtong that was first issued in an English translation by M. C. Rogers: "'Ko' [*Ge*], in this context, has the meaning of 'to match' or 'to measure'; 'yi' means 'name,' 'term' or 'concept'; 'Ko-yi' [Geyi] is (the method or scheme of) matching ideas (or terms), or 'the equation of ideas.'"[53] This short passage is shot through with contradictions. For instance, how can *yi* mean both "name" and "concept" in the same context? Even more damning, how can *ge* simultaneously mean both "to match" and "to measure"? (In the term *geyi*, *ge* actually means neither.) And how does one arrive at Tang's double definition for *geyi* as a whole from the ambivalent parts with which he asserts it is constituted? Elsewhere in the same article, Tang states that *geyi* means "the equation of concepts,"[54] but this is not very illuminating or philologically exact either. Matters did not improve when Tang's article on *geyi* was translated into Chinese,[55] for several mistakes were introduced in the process and errors that were originally in Tang's English version remain uncorrected.[56] Tang's understanding of *geyi* here (in his 1950 article) is consistent with his interpretation in his *History*: "What is *geyi*? *Ge* means 'to measure, estimate, evaluate' (*liang* 量). It is a method of comparing and matching with Chinese thought to cause people to understand Buddhist writings easily." [57]

Among the many bizarre twists in the saga of *geyi* is the development of what Japanese specialists refer to as *kakugi Bukkyō* 格義佛教 ("*geyi* Buddhism"). Here we have the reification of a hypothetical construct that never existed in historical reality, but one that—once born—takes on a life of its own and becomes a cornerstone in studies of the history and thought of Chinese Buddhism, especially among Japanese scholars, but also among Chinese and Western scholars who appear to have been influenced by them,[58] with countless disquisitions being written on the nature and impact of what is essentially an imaginary phenomenon.

One of the first Japanese scholars to use the expression "*geyi* Buddhism" was Tsukamoto Zenryū. Section 5 of chapter 1 of his *Shina Bukkyō shi kenkyū* is entitled "Kakugi Bukkyō no Tō Shin seidan shakai e no tenkai" 格義佛教の東晉清談社會への展開 (The unfolding of *geyi* Buddhism toward a society of pure conversation during the Eastern Jin).[59] The previous section offers an even more dubious proposition, that of "Daoistic Buddhism" (*Dōkyōteki Bukkyō* 道教的佛教),[60] since Daoist religion was hardly well enough established before the Eastern Jin (the period to which Tsukamoto is here referring) to have subsumed or significantly colored Buddhism. Unfortunately, Tsukamoto's notion of *Dōkyōteki Bukkyō* is adopted by later proponents of *kakugi Bukkyō* as a staple for Wei-Jin intellectuals and promoted as a parallel system that circulated among the people.[61]

Tsukamoto and other advocates of *geyi* as a vital factor in the early development of Chinese Buddhism connect the "Dark/Abstruse/Mysterious/Metaphysical Learning" (*xuanxue* 玄學) of the Wei-Jin period with *prajñā* studies, asserting that the latter were carried out under the aegis of the former. Quite the contrary, it might much more forcefully be argued (in terms of chronology and content) that it was Buddhism (in particular *prajñā* and *abhidharma* studies) that provided the new leaven in the batter of existing Chinese thought (chiefly Confucian and Daoist philosophy [not yet fully elaborated religion]) that led to the ferment which resulted in *xuanxue*.

America's major introduction to *geyi* is to be found in the enormously influential *A History of Chinese Philosophy* by Fung Yu-lan: "Such use of Taoist terminology to explain Buddhist concepts was known at the time as *ko yi* 格義 or the 'method of analogy' (lit., 'extending the idea')."[62] Here we have two incompatible renderings of *geyi* in the same sentence. On the next page, Fung expresses his indebtedness to Chen Yinke.[63] Whether directly derived from Chen or not, neither of Fung's definitions is satisfactory in terms of the available primary evidence.

Relying on Fung Yu-lan is another important Chinese scholar of the mid-twentieth century, Kung-chuan Hsiao, who makes the following

unverifiable claim about *geyi*: "At the time there were many who discussed Buddhism in terms drawn from the *Chuang Tzu* [*Zhuangzi*]; that process was called 'ko-yi' [格義, or 'matching of terms']."[64] In the index-glossary, Hsiao gives a totally different and completely idiosyncratic, self-contradictory definition for *geyi*: "'invoking the meaning', a method of matching terms used in translating Buddhist writings into Chinese."[65]

Also influenced by Chen Yinke and Tang Yongtong was Arthur Link who, in 1957, began a long series of articles in which he focused on issues that revolved around the problem of *geyi*, which he initially defined as "'matching meanings', a method whereby Chinese terms and concepts (chiefly Taoist) were paired with analogous Indian terms and ideas."[66]

The next American scholar to address the matter of *geyi* was Arthur Wright. In his short, but widely read, volume on *Buddhism in Chinese History*, he rendered the term as "matching concepts" and stated that "[t]his device, which was prevalent in the second and third centuries, was probably favored in the oral exposition of Buddhist teachings."[67] Aside from the fact that there is no indisputable evidence for *geyi* until the fourth century, Wright's characterization of this technique is so ambiguous as to be of little value. He is to be credited, however, for recognizing that numerical groupings played a part in *geyi*.

In his *Source Book*, Wing-tsit Chan defines *geyi* as "the practice of 'matching concepts' of Buddhism and Taoism, in which a Buddhist concept is matched with one in Chinese thought. Thus *tathatā* (thusness, ultimate reality) was translated by the Taoist term 'original non-being' (*pen-wu* [*benwu*], pure being)." [68] For all intents and purposes, this description of *geyi* is completely erroneous.

Kenneth Ch'en's explanation, which is based heavily on the 1950 article of Tang Yongtong, has been particularly damaging because his book has been, and still is, so widely used in introductory courses concerning Chinese Buddhism. Ch'en describes *geyi* as "the method of matching the meaning. This method was used especially by the translators of the Prajñā sutras for the purpose of making Buddhist thought more easily understood by the Chinese."[69] Many other scholars followed Ch'en in rendering *geyi* as "matching the meaning."[70] Lai spells out his definition more fully: "match Buddhist and Taoist concepts."[71] Robert Shih gives two idiosyncratic renderings of *geyi* in his French translation of *GZ*: "rendait inexactement [le sens]" and "interprétation par analogie."[72]

A typical description of *geyi* during the seventies is that given by Hurvitz and Link:

> Prior to Tao-an's time it had been popular to explain Buddhist works by a method of exegesis called *ko yi* 格義, "matching meanings." This

> meant that the Indian terms and concepts in a systematic fashion were explained via Chinese terms and concepts. In general, the texts used for this purpose were the *Lao tzu* 老子, the *Yi ching* 易經, and the *Chuang tzu* 莊子. Though this was a definite step forward in the earlier period, when it was devised as a technique of analysis and exegesis of the foreign texts, it later became a crutch and a hindrance to a correct understanding of the Buddhist concepts. Tao-an came to understand that this method of "matching meanings" frequently did injustice to the Indian texts, and it is characteristic of his great originality that, despite its traditional and almost universal acceptance by his contemporaries, he nevertheless abandoned it.[73]

Very little, if any, of this elaborate scenario can be substantiated by the meager textual evidence concerning *geyi* that is available.

Closer to the truth of the matter is Zürcher, who states that *geyi* is "elucidating Buddhist terms, notably numerical categories (*shu*), with the help of notions extracted from traditional Chinese philosophy."[74] Elsewhere, however, he follows the crowd in translating *geyi* as "matching the meanings."[75]

Tsukamoto states that, when Buddhism was first introduced to China, it was received as a sort of "Taoistic" religion, and then passed to the stage of *geyi*.[76] His translator, Hurvitz, leaves the term unrendered here, but Tsukamoto explains it as signifying the interpretation of Buddhist doctrine "by resort to the ideas of Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu." In discussing the account of Zhu Faya in *Biographies of Eminent Monks*, Tsukamoto identifies *geyi* as an exegetical method, and here (1:294) Hurvitz offers the unusual translation of "investigating the Doctrine" for this poorly understood term, although he also renders it as "matching the categories" on the very same page. A few pages later (1:297), Tsukamoto characterizes *geyi* as a "method of interpreting the Buddhist scriptures through the mediation of classic Chinese ideas." He goes on to cite Dao'an's preface to An Shigao's translation of Saṃgharakṣa's *Yogācārabhūmi-sūtra* (*Xiuxing daodi jing* 修行道地經) and his subcommentary to Kang Senghui's 康僧會 (fl. 247, d. 280 [var. 276]) commentary to An Shigao's translation of *Ānāpāna-smṛti-sūtra* (*Anban shouyi jing*) to show that, in the early stage of his career, Dao'an often utilized terms and ideas derived from the *Laozi, Zhuangzi*, and *Yijing*, which were fashionable in the *xuanxue* of the times (viz., the Wei and Western Jin periods). Tsukamoto concludes (1:299) that "the propagation of Buddhism in keeping with 'dark learning' is just another name for *ko yi* Buddhism . . . ," a gigantic leap of faith that I am unable to follow. Yet another inexplicable rendering of *geyi* is

given by Hurvitz at p. 305: "seeking the meaning." While Hurvitz's notes (1:577–79[n. i-al]), drawing heavily on the scholarship of Arthur Link, ably and conclusively document the Buddhist use of terminology from *Laozi*, *Zhuangzi*, and the *Yijing*, the presumed connection with *geyi* is not demonstrated. Tsukamoto proceeds to describe (1:309, cf. 248) *geyi* as "a movement whose aim was, through the intermediacy [*sic*] of the ideas of Lao-tzu, Chuang-tzu, and the *Canon of Changes*, to enable the Chinese to understand the Indian Buddhist scriptures."

A curious facet of Tsukamoto's treatment of *geyi* is embodied in the following passage (1:284, cf. 294 and 575, n. bw):

> an appeal to the knowledge of traditional Chinese ideas, e.g., the equation of the Five Precepts [*wu jie* 五戒, *pañca śīlāni*] with the Five Norms [*wu chang* 五常] for the purpose of propagating the scriptures among Chinese intellectuals—a style of learning known in the history of Chinese Buddhism as *ko yi*.

While this seems entirely reasonable and in line with the close connection between *geyi* and *shishu* analyzed above, the alleged equation between *wu jie* (*pañca śīlāni*) and *wu chang* is not attested among early texts referring to *geyi*.[77] Even if it were so attested, it would show how hopelessly facile and unilluminating the attempt to match up one of the countless Indian lists of technical terms with one of the few Chinese lists was.

pañca śīlāni	*wu chang*
abstinence (*virati*) from taking of animate life (*prāṇtipāta*)	humanity (*ren* 仁)
taking of anything not freely given by the possessor (*anattādāna*)	justice (*yi* 義)
violation of the code of sexual behavior obtaining in one's own society (*kāmamithyācāra*)	propriety (*li* 禮)
lying (*mṛṣāvāda*)	wisdom (*zhi* 智)
taking of alcoholic drink (*maireya-madyapāna-surā*)	faith (*xin* 信)

Tsukamoto's readiness to expand the applicability of *geyi* is apparent in a subsection entitled "'Ko yi' Translation" (1:301–306) and in his use of the expression "*ko yi* Buddhism" (1:333). This he defines (2:679, cf. 431) as "a device resorted to by all of his [i.e., Dao'an's]

contemporaries, that of interpreting the Buddhist scriptures in terms of the Chinese classics and of traditional Chinese ideas." Such a characterization grossly overrates the actual importance of *geyi*. Tsukamoto becomes further ensnarled in the labyrinthine coils of the *geyi* trap when he claims (2:705), without any factual grounding, that it is "the method that consisted of understanding, or of expounding, the Prajñāpāramitā by resort to 'dark learning,' i.e., to a set of ideas claiming descent from Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu. . . ." We are provided (2:709, cf. 1:297 and 2:712 and 803) yet another definition of our elusive term: "'investigating the meaning' (*ko yi*, that is, of interpreting and explaining the translated scriptures through the intermediacy [*sic*] of words and ideas indigenous to the Chinese tradition)." Finally, Tsukamoto avers (2:796) that Buddhist scholarship of Dao'an's time was called *geyi* and consisted of "understanding and explaining the Buddhist scriptures in terms of Chinese literature. . . ."

Confusion and imprecision concerning *geyi* persisted with Ren Jiyu's pronouncements on this subject:

> As for Dao'an and others using the words of Lao-Zhuang and Dark Learning in their prefaces for sutras and such compositions to explain Buddhist doctrines, this is also *geyi*. If this foreign religion, Buddhism, wanted to sink its roots solidly in China, it would have been difficult for Chinese to understand and accept it had they not resorted to *geyi*.[78]

Such sweeping assertions are unsupported by the actual textual evidence for *geyi*. But still more outlandish interpretations of *geyi* continue to abound, of which I shall mention only Peng Ziqiang's "Subjectively Retelling."[79]

In contrast, Robert Sharf is to be commended for his skeptical approach to *geyi* as a significant phenomenon in Chinese Buddhist history. He realizes that it is—at best—a hermeneutic strategy, and evinces a critical attitude toward modern scholarly interpretations of this vastly overrated teaching technique,[80] even going so far as to refer to it as a "red herring."[81]

A soberer approach is reflected in the studies of early Buddhist translation procedures carried out by Jan Nattier. In them, we learn what actually transpired when Sanskrit texts were converted into Chinese scriptures, instead of what some imaginary *geyi* technique demanded. For instance, Nattier refers to what she calls "Chinese cultural calques." These are "translations that make no attempt to reflect the etymology

of the Indian term, but instead employ what was viewed as a suitable counterpart in Chinese."[82] The examples she gives are telling:

āraṇya ("forest, wilderness" → *shan ze* 山澤 ("mountain and marsh")
kṣatriya ("warrior, aristocrat") → *junzi* 君子 ("gentleman")
arhat (worthy one, person who has attained the ultimate goal of *nirvāṇa* → *zhenren* 真人 ("perfected one")
niraya ("hell, nether regions") → *taishan* 太山 ("Mt. Tai")
nirvāṇa ("awakening; the unconditioned [*asaṃskṛta*] state") → *wuwei* 無爲 ("inaction, unmade")
cakravartin ("wheel-turning [king], universal ruler") → *feixing huangdi* 飛行皇帝 ("flying emperor")

By no means can all of these terms, even by the remotest stretch of the imagination, be characterized as "Daoist." Indeed, if one were pressed to denominate their intellectual-religious orientation, they may be classified as variously belonging to Confucian, Daoist, popular, and whimsical outlooks. Even *wuwei*, which *geyi* enthusiasts constantly invoke as one of their favorite examples of an early Buddhist borrowing of "Daoist" terminology, was certainly not restricted to Daoist texts, but was used more broadly by Confucians and others as well.[83] There is no question that *nirvṇa/nibbāna* was occasionally rendered as *wuwei* in early Buddhist translations,[84] yet there is no indication that this was part of a systematic, conscious policy to appropriate Daoist terminology that was allegedly known as *geyi*. Furthermore, *wuwei* is used to render more than a half-dozen different Sanskrit terms,[85] and the negative *wu* is used at the beginning of more than two thousand words translated from Sanskrit.[86] It would be ludicrous to insist that any Buddhist text that uses the terms *wu* or *wuwei* be branded as Daoistic simply because they also occur in Daoist texts.

It is often alleged by *geyi* enthusiasts that, since early translators such as Lokakṣema (支婁迦讖, fl. ca. 180–189) and Zhi Qian 支謙 (220–252) (in their translations of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpūramitā-sūtra*) used *benwu* 本無 ("fundamental nothingness; original nonbeing") to translate *tathathā* ("thusness"), they were emulating Laozi and Zhuangzi. But Laozi never used the expression *benwu*, and it is quite a stretch to claim—as some do—that this is the sort of language Laozi might have used. In the *Zhuangzi*, the graphs *ben* and *wu* occur in succession three times, but never as a technical term, only with the meaning "there originally was no X."[87] One might just as well assert that using *benwu* for *tathatā* was an innovative effort on the part of the early transla-

tors (in particular, Lokakṣema) to come up with a suitable functional equivalent of *tathatā*, especially when they were as yet unequipped to devise more philologically exact renderings. But even if we accept that *benwu* is a Daoist technical term (a proposition of which I remain dubious [*contra* Wing-tsit Chan[88] and countless others]), there is no justification for citing the rendering of *tathatā* ("thusness") by *benwu* as an instance of *geyi*, since *benwu* is nowhere even remotely associated with *geyi*. Although the use of *benwu* for *tathatā* is a favorite example of supposed "*geyi* translation," it is entirely spurious, as is the very concept of *geyi* translation itself.

What this sample of Buddhist terminology shows unmistakably is that early translators of Indian texts into Chinese creatively used the entire inventory of Literary Sinitic (LS), picking and choosing from what was available to convey as best they could the ideas and images of this alien religion. There is no evidence whatsoever that indicates that they favored Daoist terminology over any other sector of the whole lexicon of LS. In fact, some early translators, especially Lokakṣema, Zhi Qian, and Kang Senghui, avoided indigenous terminology as much as possible, resorting to transcription instead. This is in contrast to individuals (actually a team) such as An Xuan 安玄 (fl. 181) and Yan Fotiao 嚴佛調 (fl. 181–188), who tended to translate names and terms rather than transcribe them.[89] Yet even the latter (those who preferred translation over transcription) were not demonstrably partial to Daoist terminology.

Conclusion

Though *geyi* is enshrined in modern scholarship as a cardinal principle of early Buddho-Daoist interactions, in terms of what actually transpired in history it was but a brief, insignificant episode. With regard to the question of the transmission of Buddhism from India to China, it was by no means an essential mechanism for its early assimilation. Although (according to the modern doctrine of *geyi*) it is commonly asserted that, when Buddhism arrived in China during the Eastern Han period, it instinctively turned to Daoism for its technical terminology and other religious attributes, what actually transpired is more nearly just the opposite.[90] Namely, Buddhism came to China as an already highly sophisticated religion with an extensive corpus of texts, an elaborate system of thought, complex institutional structures, and an advanced tradition of artistic representation. Conversely, it was at this very same time (around the second century CE) that Daoist religion began to take

shape. Consequently, Daoism was in no position to serve as a model for the development of Buddhism in China. In other words, we may say that Daoism as a formal, organized religion with a body of texts, monastic rules and institutions, nascent iconography, and set of ritualized practice was to a large extent a response to the advent of Buddhism. But that is a large and daunting topic that I hope will someday merit an international conference or several panels of its own. Surely, the whole issue of Buddho-Daoist interactions deserves to be worked out in much more detail, specificity, and accuracy than heretofore.

In the meantime, the erroneous understanding of *geyi* distorts both the history of Buddhism and of Daoism individually, especially the former. It is enough that countless innocent students are led astray by erroneous definitions and specious accounts of *geyi* in otherwise generally reliable reference books, textbooks, and monographs. Perhaps worst of all, pseudo-*geyi* has spawned an entire industry of fake philosophizing about the intellectual history of China, particularly that of the period of the Northern and Southern Dynasties (or Six Dynasties) that followed the Han. *Geyi Fojiao* or *kakugi Bukkyō* ("*geyi* Buddhism") is a purely modern notion, but it is projected back nearly two thousand years, as though "matching concepts" were the defining characteristic of the first stage of Buddhism in China. It would be easy to cite dozens of wildly imaginative articles that make pseudo-*geyi* the linchpin of their recondite ruminations on *xuanxue*, which is surely already a difficult enough subject of its own without having to get mixed up with a chimera such as pseudo-*geyi*.[91] Many of these studies frankly admit, moreover, that they are working with extended (*yinshen* 引伸) interpretations of *geyi*, and go so far as to declare that *geyi* was a method of comparative philosophy operative throughout Chinese history after the advent of Buddhism.[92] All of these overblown theses built upon pseudo-*geyi* and its extended variations are empty and ahistorical.

Itō's 1996 article is a handy survey of Chinese and Japanese scholarship on *geyi*. The author declares:

> For my own part, I basically wish to adopt the interpretation of *geyi* put forward by Chen Yinke and other Chinese researchers. In addition to this, I characterize the indigenous thought of China that played such a decisive role especially in *geyi*-based Buddhism, namely, Lao-Zhuang thought, as the "philosophy of *dao-li*," and defining *geyi* as the comprehension and interpretation of Buddhism on the basis of this philosophy of *dao-li*. I refer to all forms of Buddhism based on this *geyi*-conditioned understanding as "*geyi*-based Buddhism."[93]

This is a prime example of *geyi*ism run amok. From a failed exegetical technique of little consequence, *geyi* has mushroomed into a colossal, chimerical congeries of Daoistic Buddhisms premised on a nebulous "philosophy of *dao-li* 道理." We must resist the temptation to dehistoricize the limited textual record available to us and to stray so far from the results of disciplined philological inquiry concerning it.

In sum, it is vital to recognize that the comparanda of *geyi* were not Buddhist and Daoist terms for purposes of translation,[94] but numerical lists of Buddhist and non-Buddhist terms for purposes of explanation. Furthermore, *geyi* lasted for but a brief moment in the history of Buddhism, and was almost totally unknown outside of the handful of its practitioners. In a comprehensive, detailed history of the development of early Chinese Buddhism, *geyi* deserves to be mentioned, but not as the centerpiece that modern scholarship has made of it.

Abbreviations

CSJ — *Chu sanzang jiji* 出三藏記集 (Collected notes on the production of the *Tripiṭaka*).

GZ — *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 (Biographies of eminent monks).

HDC — *Hanyu da cidian* 漢語大詞典 (Unabridged dictionary of Sinitic).

j. — *juan* 卷 ("scroll, fascicle, chapter").

MSM — Modern Standard Mandarin.

n. — note.

SQ — *(Qinding) Siku quanshu* 欽定四庫全書 (Imperially commissioned complete writings in the four repositories). 1,500 vols. Shanghai guji reprint (1987).

T — *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經, 100 vols. The standard modern edition of the Chinese Buddhist canon, edited by Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡邊海旭. Tokyo: The Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1922–1934. The form of reference for this work is *T*.50 (2059) 347a18–27, where 50 is the volume number, 2059 is the text number, 347 is the page number, "a" is the register, and 18–27 are the lines quoted.

Notes

So many people have helped me in so many ways during the prolonged course of the writing of this chapter that I almost feel as though what started as a personal quest gradually became a collaborative enterprise. Daniel Boucher, Josh Capitanio, and Jidong Yang were responsible for the computer searches

that provided the hard data for my analysis. This trio also provided much other expert assistance and good advice. Denis Mair photocopied important materials and mailed them to me when I was on leave in distant places, and Jidong Chen went out of his way to track down an important article at a critical moment. Seishi Karashima and the keenly interested members of his "clubs" in Tokyo participated in informed discussions on various aspects of *geyi*, and lively audiences at Princeton University, UCLA, the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study in the Social Sciences, and a panel at the Fourth International Convention of Asia Scholars in Shanghai organized by Alan K. L. Chan and Yuet-Keung Lo all offered valuable feedback. Several years ago, Jan Nattier kindly sent me two of her unpublished papers on early Chinese Buddhist translation procedures and later made many helpful suggestions for improvement of the final draft. Nathan Sivin and Paul Goldin offered incisive philological comments on *shishu*. Takata Tokio and Kajiura Susumu made it possible for me to use the splendid resources of the library of the Institute for Research in Humanities (Jinbun Kagaku Kenkyūjo) of Kyoto University, while Silvio Vita and Antonino Forte made available the holdings of the Italian School for Oriental Studies in Kyoto, as did François Lachaud those of the French Institute for Far Eastern Research, also in Kyoto. Among those who generously supplied scholarly references are Jens Braarvig, John Kieschnick, James Benn, Funayama Toru, Stefano Zacchetti, Timothy Barrett, Antonello Palumbo, Stephen Bokenkamp, Charles Muller, Jinhua Chen, Huaiyu Chen, Whalen Lai, Ronald Egan, and Alban Kojima. Finally, I am grateful to Li-ching Chang for serving as a sounding board during the three decades of this chapter's gestation and always being ready to proffer sensible advice. Naturally, I alone bear full responsibility for the views expressed herein.

1. Axel Schuessler, *Etymological Dictionary of Old Chinese* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), under *gé*, *gè*.
2. Among the dozens of dictionaries consulted are the following authoritative, standard sources: *Xiandai Hanyu cidian* 現代漢語詞典 (5th ed.; to save space, I do not give complete publication data [place, publisher, etc.] for well-known works); *Xinhua zidian* 新華字典 (10th ed.); *New Age Chinese-English Dictionary* (Beijing: Commercial Press, 2000); *ABC Chinese-English Comprehensive Dictionary* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003).
3. In the whole of the enormous *SQ*, there are only seven occurrences of *geyi*, and not one of them meaningfully enlarges our understanding of the development of Buddhism during the late Han, Wei-Jin period beyond what can be learned from the sources gathered in the "Primary Evidence" section of this chapter. I have very carefully read all of the passages in *SQ* that contain *ge* and *yi* in immediate succession and have determined that they are all "false hits" (in that they should be separated by a period or comma), repetitions of one of the primary sources already discussed, or irrelevant to the problem of Buddho-Daoist interaction during the late Han, Wei-Jin period.

Vol. 851. Wang Guanguo 王觀國 (an author of the Zhao Song period [960-1279]), *Xuelin* 學林 (Grove of learning; a lexicographical, philological study), 5.18a (p. 125a): false hit.

Vol. 1021. Zhang Yushu 張玉書 (1642–1711) et al., *(Yuding) Peiwen yunfu* 御定佩文韻府 ([Imperially commissioned] treasury of rhymes [from the studio of] esteem for literature; a huge lexicon first published in 1711, with a supplement in 1720), 63/8.34a (p. 379b): a repetition of the *Fayuan zhulin* passage to be discussed shortly.

Vol. 709. Wu Ruyu 吳如愚 (fl. 1238), *Zhun zhai zashuo* 準齋雜說 (Miscellaneous discussions from the Studio of Standards; a collection of essays on Neo-Confucian topics), A5b (p. 709a): "the meaning of *ge*" (which is here defined as *zheng* 正 ["correct, upright"]).

Vol. 1253. Cheng Minzheng 程敏政 (1445–ca. 1499), *Huangdun wenji* 篁墩文集 (Collected prose from the Bamboo Grove Mound; miscellaneous essays on topics of interest to literati), 53.4a (p. 245b): "the meaning of *jiushe ge* 九射格 [a target used in drinking games that is divided into nine compartments]."

Vol. 1400. Mei Dingzuo 梅鼎祚 (1549–1615), *Shiwen ji* 釋文紀 (Records of Buddhist writings), 11.9b (p. 608b): copies Sengrui's comments discussed below.

Vol. 1401. Ibid., 16.6b (p. 73a), copies Huirui's comments discussed below.

Vol. 1474. Hu Wenxue 胡文學 (fl. 1660), *Yongshang qijiu shi* 甬上耆舊詩 (A collection of poems from the elders of Ningbo), 29.2a (p. 562a): false hit.

Guoxue baodian 國學寶典 has a total of nine occurrences of *geyi*, of which six may be traced back to T. Of the remaining three, one is from Wang Qinruo 王欽若 et al., ed., *Cefu yuangui* 冊府元龜 (Outstanding models from the storehouse of literature [1013]), j. 337 where the two graphs mean something entirely different from the *geyi* of early Buddhism ("repository of principles for the categories of commendation" [*xunge yifu* 勳格義府]), another is from the Confucian scholar Chen Hu's 陳瑚 (1613–1675) *Yiguan wenda* 一貫問答 (Questions and answers on the one thread that ties everything together), 1, where it occurs with yet another meaning in the clause *you ge jun xin zhi ge yi* 有格君心之格義 ("has the meaning of *ge* in the expression *ge jun xin* ['examine' the mind of the sovereign]"). The third occurrence is from a reference in a twentieth-century journal entitled *Guoxue jin lun* 國學今論 to Chen Yinke's article discussed below. Similar observations may be made about the even fewer instances of *geyi* in the CHANT database and in other major electronic resources consulted during the preparation of this chapter.

4. It is noteworthy that *geyi* is generally not mentioned in Buddhist dictionaries and encyclopedias compiled before around the sixties of the twentieth century. For instance, it is not to be found in Ding Fubao 丁福保 ed., *Foxue da cidian* 佛學大辭典 (1925) or William Edward Soothill

and Lewis Hodous, comps., *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms with Sanskrit and English Equivalents and a Sanskrit-Pali Index* (1937). In many cases, major non-Buddhist reference works from the sixties and later still do not mention *geyi*. It is missing from Morohashi Tetsuji 諸橋轍次, ed., *Dai Kan-Wa jiten* 大漢和辭典 (1955–1960; rev. 1966–1988; enlarged 1984–1986) and Luo Zhufeng 羅竹風, ed., *Hanyu da cidian* 漢語大詞典 (1986–1994). Other dictionaries from which *geyi* is absent are the following: *Bol'shoi Kitaisko-Russkii Slovar'*, 4 vols. (1983–1984); *Grand dictionnaire Ricci de la langue chinoise*, 7 vols. (2001); Herbert Giles, *A Chinese-English Dictionary* (1892, 1912); *Mathews' Chinese-English Dictionary* (1931; 1975); *Gwoyeu tsyrdean* 國語辭典 (1937 and later editions). Even the largest available dictionaries for the study of Daoism do not have entries for *geyi*, e.g., *Daojiao da cidian* 道教大辭典 (1994) and *Zhonghua daojiao da cidian* 中華道教大辭典 (1995). All of this goes to show that, properly speaking, *geyi* was not recognized as worthy of inclusion in general reference works and, indeed, in specialized works for the study of Buddhism and Daoism. It was only from the seventies and later that *geyi* began to be common in reference works for the study of Buddhism and occasionally in general reference works.

The otherwise usually reliable *Foguang da cidian* 佛光大辭典 (1988), edited by Ciyi 慈怡, has a fairly lengthy entry on *geyi* (vol. 5, p. 4143bc), the first part of which I shall translate here as typical of the sort of thing that started to show up after the seventies:

> To explain Buddhist principles through Daoist or [other] non-Buddhist ideas. When Buddhism was first transmitted to the east, intellectuals often were receptive to it because of its resemblance to Lao-Zhuang thought. By Wei-Jin times Lao-Zhuang thought was even more often used to explain the principle of emptiness in *prajñā*. The intellectual fashion of this transitional period was called *geyi*. Representative figures of the times were the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove. Buddhism was thus influenced by the fashion of the Pure Conversationalists [to talk about] the principle of emptiness in Lao-Zhuang. Without exception, Buddhist lectures and commentaries on Buddhist texts all regularly cite terms from Lao, Zhuang, and *Yijing* (The Book of Changes). In later times, aspects of the Buddhist dharma were also forcefully compared to Confucian thought, and this too can be considered as a type of *geyi*.

Though the second long paragraph of the entry is more believable (inasmuch as it is devoted to citing specific texts in which the term *geyi* actually occurs), most of what is said in the first paragraph (quoted here) is pure fantasy. The dictionary declares that it has based its entry on Tang Yongtong, *Wei-Jin Nanbeichao Fojiao shi*, ch. 9. Tang's interpretation of *geyi* will be discussed below. The entry on *geyi* in the widely respected *Bukkyōgo daijiten* 佛教語大辞典 (1975) edited by Nakamura Hajime 中村元 (vol. 1, 174d) says essentially the same thing as does the Foguang dictionary, but uses only two sentences and is less elaborate in its

presentation: "Matching non-Buddhist religious concepts to Buddhist technical terms in order to understand Buddhism. When Buddhism was first transmitted to China, it was the scholarly fashion to explain the emptiness of *prajñā* by analogy to Lao-Zhuang thought." The general indebtedness to Tang Yongtong is inescapable.

By the eighties and nineties, this type of misinformation about *geyi* had managed to seep into such reputable reference tools as the last printed edition (1974, 1988: 6.778a) and the online version of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1998). Similarly, the 1999 edition of *Cihai* 辭海, vol. 3, 3506b defines *geyi* thus:

> A method for explaining Buddhist sutras during the Wei-Jin period. At that time, when Buddhist sutras had only recently been transmitted to China, in order to make it easier to propagate them, some Buddhist scholars invariably used indigenous concepts and vocabulary from Chinese philosophy (chiefly Lao-Zhuang philosophy) to carry out strained comparisons and explanations. They believed that they could thereby "measure" the texts of the sutras and clarify the principles in them, hence the name [*geyi*].

The signature of Tang Yongtong is also evident in this entry, particularly in the interpretation of *ge* 格 as "measure" (*liangdu* 量度). But the ultimate indebtedness to Chen Yinke is inescapable as well, especially in the use of the expression "strained comparisons" (*bifu*).

A refreshing, recent counterexample to all of this attention paid to *geyi* is the *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, Robert E. Buswell Jr., editor in chief, 2 vols. (Macmillan Reference USA. New York, Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2004), which declines to award it an entry. However, in his article on China in this encyclopedia (143a), Mario Poceski states: "A case in point is the putative method of 'matching the meaning' (*geyi*), which involved pairing key Buddhist terms with Chinese expressions primarily derived from Daoist sources."

5. Missing in some editions of the text, the surname Zhu 竺 is short for Tianzhu 天竺 (a Sinitic transcription of Sindhu). Zhu does not always indicate Indian ancestry, since (in the case of monks) it can also serve as a "lineage surname," i.e., an indication of ethnikon borne by the monk's master rather than of his own ethnic heritage.
6. The name literally means "Dharmic Elegance."
7. There is still a county of this name in central Hebei, approximately 150 km south of the center of Beijing.
8. Literally, "external" (*wai* 外).
9. Literally, "ideas," "meanings," or "concepts" (*yi* 義).
10. The name signifies Sogdian parentage. He was from Zhongshan 中山, a little over one hundred km to the west of Hejian.
11. By which Huijiao 慧皎 (497–554; compiler of *GZ*, the text being quoted here) must mean "with (comparable enumeration of items) in non-Buddhist writings."

12. None of the scholars who have studied this passage have come up with a satisfactory interpretation of the phrase *sheng jie zhi li* 生解之例. A possible alternative to the novel attempt given in my translation is "examples for generating understanding."
13. The precise identification of these individuals is not known, but they were most likely followers of Zhu Faya and Kang Falang.
14. Dao'an is the famous fourth-century cleric about whom we will have much more to say below; nothing more is known about Fatai.
15. Apparently 130 km to the southwest of Zhongshan.
16. *GZ* 4, *T.*50 (2059) 347a18–27. Subsequent citations from the *Taishō* will be given in the text.
17. Yin Hao 殷浩 (306–356) is referred to in the text as *zhongjun* 中軍 ("[Generalissimo of the] Central Army"), a post he assumed in 350. For failure in a military campaign (352–353) to recover the north, he was dismissed and exiled to western Zhejiang, where he spent the last three years of his life immersed in the study of Buddhist scriptures. See Richard B. Mather, trans. and annot., *Shih-shuo Hsin-yü: A New Account of Tales of the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), 604, for a short biographical sketch.
18. The commandery in western Zhejiang to which Yin Hao was exiled.
19. Cf. Mather, *Shih-shuo Hsin-yü*, 123; Chinese text in Zhang Yongyan 張永言, ed., *Shishuo xinyu cidian* 世說新語辭典 (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin, 1992), 643.
20. These are the five components that are said to constitute the pseudo-personality: 1. the physical body; form or sensuous quality (*rūpa*), 2. sensation, reception, feeling (*vedanā*), 3. thought, perception; conceptualization (*samjñā*), 4. action; mental acts (*karma* or *saṃskāra*), 5. consciousness; cognition (*vijñāna*).
21. The six sense-fields/organs (*sadindriyāni*) and their corresponding objects of perception/cognition: 1. the eyes (*caksus*) and 2. visible sights (*rūpa*), 3. the ears (*śrota*) and 4. sounds (*śabda*), 5. the nose (*ghrāṇa*) and 6. smells (*gandha*), 7. the tongue (*jihvā*) and 8. taste (*rasa*), 9. the tactile body (*kāya*) and 10. tangible objects (*spraṣṭavya*), 11. the mind (*manah*) and 12. mental data (*dharma*).
22. These are the Four Noble Truths that form the core of Buddhist religion: 1. life is flawed/unsatisfactory, i.e., suffering (*duhkha*), 2. the arising (*samudaya*) of suffering is due to craving, 3. there can be cessation (*nirodha*) of suffering, 4. there is a way (*mārga*) (viz., the Eightfold Path) to the cessation of suffering.
23. These twelve *nidāna*s (contributory causes/conditions) are: 1. spiritual ignorance (*avidyā*), 2. blind volition (*saṃskāra*), 3. consciousness (*vijñāna*), 4. mental functions and the formation of physical elements (*nāma-rūpa*), 5. the six sense-organs (*sad-āyatana*), 6. contact with external objects (*sparśa*), 7. sensations/perceptions (*vedanā*), 8. craving/desire for pleasure (*trsnā*), 9. grasping what one craves/desires (*upādāna*),

10. the state of existing (*bhava*), 11. birth (*jāti*), 12. old age and death (*jarā-marana*).

24. These are the same as the six sense-organs (*sad-indriya*) listed above in note 21, minus the last, viz., "mind" (*manah*).
25. These are the five positive powers, each of which overcomes its opposite negative tendency: 1. faith (*śraddhā*) overcomes false beliefs, 2. energy (*vīrya*) overcomes slothfulness, 3. mindfulness (*smrti*) overcomes forgetfulness, 4. concentration (*samādhi*) overcomes distractedness, 5. transcendental insight (*prajñā*) overcomes ignorance.
26. They are: 1. mindfulness (*smrti*), 2. investigation of the elements of empirical reality (*dharma-pravicaya*), 3. energetic exertion (*vīrya*), 4. rapture (*prīti*), 5. lightness, i.e., repose (*praśabdhi*), 6. concentration (*samādhi*), 7. indifference (*upeksā*).
27. *Foguang da cidian* (1988), 4.3421c-3422a.
28. Soothill and Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms* (1937), 270a.
29. Kasawara Kenjiu, annot., F. Max Müller and H. Wenzel, ed. *Buddhist Technical Terms: An ancient Buddhist text ascribed to Nāgārjuna* (Delhi: Orient, n.d.), 66.
30. Wogihara Unrai [Ogiwara Unrai] 荻原雲來 and Tsuji Naoshirō 辻道四郎, eds., *Kan'yaku taish Bon-wa daijiten* (漢譯對照) 梵和大辭典 (Tokyo: Suzuki gakujutsu zaidan, 1968), 471a, 1457a.
31. Margaret Stutley and James Stutley, *Harper's Dictionary of Hinduism: Its Mythology, Folklore, Philosophy, Literature, and History* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1984), 264a.
32. An Shigao was a Parthian who arrived in Luoyang in 148 CE. His surname is a truncated form of the Chinese transcription of the dynastic name Arsacid. T'ang Yung-T'ung [Tang Yongtong 湯用彤], "On 'Ko-Yi,' the Earliest Method by which Indian Buddhism and Chinese Thought were Synthesized," translated by M. C. Rogers, in *Radhakrishnan: Comparative Studies in Philosophy Presented in Honour of His Sixtieth Birthday* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1950), 280–83 (full essay, 276–86), provides an excellent account of An Shigao's affinity for Abhidharma and the vital role of categories therein. Anyone who wishes to have a deeper understanding of the significance of enumeration (*shu*) in early Chinese Buddhism leading up to the time of Zhu Faya would profit from reading this account by Tang. See also Arthur E. Link, "Biography of Shih Tao-an," *T'oung Pao*, 46.1-2 (1958): 9, n. 4 (full essay, 1–48). In short, Abhidharma was extraordinarily fond of enumerations and exposition by division and subdivision.
33. There is no evidence that *geyi* existed or was practiced before the time of Zhu Faya.
34. *Shixiang* 實相 (*dharmatā*, *dharma-svabhāva*, *naya*, *bhūta-naya*, *lāksanika*, *svabhāva-laksana*). For references, see Zhu Qingzhi 朱慶之 and Mei Weiheng 梅維恆 (Victor H. Mair), eds., *Diyuan Yunlai*

[Ogiwara Unrai] Hanyi duizhao Fan-He da cidian Hanyici suoyin 荻原雲來《漢譯對照梵和大辭典》漢譯詞索引 [Alphabetical index to the Chinese translations in the Sanskrit-Japanese Dictionary (with Parallel Chinese Translations) of Ogiwara Unrai] (Chengdu: Ba-Shu, 2004), 255a; cf. n. 30 above.

35. The complete biography (*T.*50 [2059] 355a.18–29) of Sengxian is translated by Link, "Biography of Shih Tao-an," 42–44.
36. In Yongshi County, modern Hebei.
37. Tang, "On 'Ko-Yi'," 284, mistakenly writes 394. There is also an error in his footnote 2 on the same page which states that the following passage is from *Taishō*, Vol. 50, p. 33 (instead of p. 355).
38. The expression *xiaoyao* 逍遙 here does not refer to the first chapter in *Zhuangzi* ("Xiaoyao you" [Carefree wandering]), as some interpreters have assumed. Already by the Han, *xiaoyao* (in various sinographic forms) was used to indicate an unrestrained, happy attitude. It is particularly interesting to note that it was sometimes used to indicate a more relaxed approach to life in contrast to lectures and study as, for example, in "Chi she fu" 馳射賦 (Rhapsody on mounted archery) by the Han writer, Ying Yang 應瑒 (d. 217): "On a fine day in sunny spring, in my spare time from lectures and study, I am carefree (*xiaoyao*) in the courtyard, take pleasure in riding and archery" (see *HDC* 11.366ab). Indeed, no less a giant of Buddhist translation than Kumārajīva undertook some of his work in the Xiaoyao Yuan 逍遙園 ("Carefree Garden") of Chang'an (see his biography in *GZ*14; *T.55* [2145] 101b.16).
39. Sanskrit *dharma-dundubhi* or *dharma-bheri*, here signifying Buddhist monks in their capacity as preachers of the Dharma.
40. Realized by Sengrui's teacher, Dao'an.
41. My translation of this sentence is indebted to Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*, 2 vols. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972), 328, n. 56. Zürcher points out that "[t]he chancellor of Guangling" (in the vicinity of modern Jiangdu 江都 county northeast of Nanjing, between Yangzhou and Taizhou in Jiangsu province) must refer to Zhai Rong 笮融, although, strictly speaking, at that moment this post was occupied by another magistrate, viz., Zhao Yu 趙昱. "[T]he chancellor of Pengcheng" 彭城 (the region north of the Huai River, in eastern Henan, southern Shandong, and northern Jiangsu) in 194 CE was Xue Li 薛禮, who appears to have been associated with Zhai Rong, though nothing is known about his alleged Buddhist sympathies.
42. If, as the totality of evidence would seem to indicate, Zhu Faya was the chief proponent and probable initiator of *geyi* during the first half of the fourth century, then the ca. 220 date of the passage from the "Yuyi lun" under discussion makes the late *geyi* variant all the more suspect.
43. The text says merely Zhi-Zhu 支竺, which is an abbreviated reference for Yuezhi 月支 (through a process of historical description, this name

often used to be rendered as "Indo-Scythian," but the precise ethnicity and linguistic affiliation of this important Central Asian group are still being debated; hence I shall leave it untranslated) and Tianzhu (signifying "Indian"). The phrase is that of Sengzhao who, in his preface to the *Vimalakīrti-sūtra* (*T.55* [2145] 58b.9–10), originally used it to designate Zhi Qian (fl. 220–252) and Zhu Fahu (i.e., Dharmarakṣa, who is said in traditional biographies to have been a descendant of the Yuezhi). See Robert Shih, trans. and annot., *Biographies des moines éminents (Kao seng tchouan) de Houei-kiao*. Bibliothèque du *Muséon*, vol. 54 (Louvain: Institut Orientaliste, 1968), 74n56. For a detailed study of the translation techniques of this period, see Daniel J. Boucher, "Buddhist Translation Procedures in Third-Century China: A Study of Dharmaraksa and His Translation Idiom" (PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1996). Boucher points out (p. 8) that it was particularly Zhi Qian and Dharmarakṣa who preferred to translate proper names and technical terms rather than transcribe them, in contrast to the style of Lokakṣema (Zhiloujiachen 支婁迦讖, fl. 180–189), who, however, was also a Yuezhi. The gist of Sengzhao's critique of the style of Zhi Qian and Dharmarakṣa as *zhiwen geyi*, then, would seem to be that they erred in overly Sinicizing or indigenizing their translations, presumably at the expense of faithfulness to the Indic originals. In any event, there can be no doubt that *zhiwen geyi* is a pejorative stigmatization of the translation style of Zhi Qian and Zhu Fahu.

44. For a note on the origin and significance of this expression, see Shih, *Biographies des moines éminents*, 74, n. 57, who points out that it may ultimately derive from Dao'an's preface to the *Moheboluoruoboluomi jing chao* 摩訶鉢羅若 (*sic*) 波羅蜜經抄 [Extracts from the *Mahāprajñāp āramitā-sūtra*], in which Dao'an states, "Whenever I come to a stagnant sentence (*zhi ju* 滯句) or a passage where the beginning and the ending are obscured, I set the scroll aside and think deeply, regretting that I never met such men as Dharmarakṣa and Moksala" (*CSJ* 8; *T.55* [2145] 52b.11–13). The text only says "Hu gong Chaluo" 護公叉羅, but most likely is an abbreviated reference to the Gansu Yuezhi Zhu Fahu 竺法護 and the Khotanese Wuchaluo 無叉羅 (var. Wuluocha 無羅叉), both of whom produced *Prajñāpāramitā* translations in the latter part of the third century (286 and 291 respectively).

45. To save space, for texts that are not discussed in depth, I only give the *Taishō* reference, and not the titles of the individual texts themselves.

46. But we should not overlook the fact that 挌 and 格 are interchangeable in one of the many senses of the former, viz., "to strike, hit" (though, of course, not in all senses).

47. Or twenty-five if two questionable variants are included. In addition, *ge* and *yi* occur next to each other, but not as a technical term related to the problem under discussion here, in *T.*38 (1779) 799c23 (by Zhiyuan 智

圓 [976–1022]) and *T.*40 (1805) 353b13–15 (by Yuanzhao 元照 [1048–1116]).

48. Chen Yinke 陳寅恪, "Zhi Mindu xueshuo kao" 支愍度學說考, in *Guoli Zhongyang Yanjiuyuan Lishi Yuyan Yanjiusuo jikan* 國立中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊 (Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology of Academia Sinica), *Wai bian* 外編 (Extra series), 1, *Qingzhu Cai Yuanpei xiansheng liushiwu sui lunwen ji* 慶祝蔡元培先生六十五歲論文集 (Beiping: Zhongyang Yanjiuyuan, 1933, 1935), 6. Reprinted in *Chen Yinke wenji* 陳寅恪文集, 2, *Jinming guan conggao* 金明館叢稿(Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1980), 141–67.
49. Chen Yinke, "Qingtan wu guo (fu 'geyi')" 清談誤國 (附"格義"), in Wan Shengnan 萬繩楠, ed., *Chen Yinke Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi jiangyan lu* 陳寅恪魏晉南北朝史講演錄 (Hefei: Huangshan, 1987), 63–64 (full essay, 45–64).
50. In his identification of cultural parallels as constituting instances of *geyi*, Chen Yinke apparently does not distinguish between alleged Buddhist borrowing of Daoist terms and Daoist borrowing of Buddhist terms, for surely in this instance a supposedly Daoist group has been modeled on an Indian topos, inasmuch as Zhulin 竹林 is the Chinese translation of the celebrated Venuvana ("Bamboo Grove") or Karanda-venuvana, a monastery park near the city of Rājagrha that was donated to Śākyamuni by King Bimbisāra (or, according to another account, by the elder Karanda).
51. Sun Chuo was fond of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, as is evident in his "Yu Dao lun" 喻道論 [A treatise on analogies of the Way], which is contained in *Hongming ji* 弘明集, 3, in *T.*52 (2102) 16b7–17c25.
52. Chen Yinke, "Zhi Mindu xueshuo kao," 10.
53. Tang Yongtong, "On 'Ko-Yi,'" 277–78 (see note 32 above).
54. Ibid., 276.
55. Tang Yongtong, "Lun 'geyi'—zui zao yi zhong ronghe Yindu Fojiao he Zhongguo sixiang de fangfa" 論「格義」—最早一種融合印度佛教和中國思想的方法, translated from English (Tang 1950) to Chinese by Shi Jun 石峻, in *Lixue, Foxue, Xuanxue* 理學 · 佛學 · 玄學 (Beijing: Beijing daxue, 1991), 282–94. This has also been collected in *Tang Yongtong quanji* 湯用彤全集 (The complete works of Tang Yongtong), vol. 5 (Shijiazhuang, Hebei: Hebei renmin, 2000), 231–42. The original Chinese draft on which Rogers based his English translation has not, to the best of my knowledge, been found.
56. See, for example, those mentioned in note 32 above.
57. Tang Yongtong, *Han Wei Liang Jin Nanbeichao Fojiao shi* 漢魏兩晉南北朝佛教史 (A History of Buddhism during the Han, Wei, Two Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties), 2 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1983; originally published by Shangwu in 1936–38), 168 (171 in the 1936 edition). Or *geliang* 格量, as on p. 170 (173).
58. For example, Kobayashi Masayoshi 小林正美, "'Kakugi Bukkyō' kō"

「格義仏教」考, in Takasaki Jikidō 高崎直道 and Kimura Kiyotaka 木村清孝, eds., *Shin Bukkyō no kōryū: Higashi Ajiya no Bukkyō shisō II* 新仏教の興隆: 東アジアの仏教思想Π, Higashi Ajiya Bukkyō 東アジア仏教, 3 (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1997), 293–303. Also see Hayashima Kyōshō 早島鏡正 and Takasaki Jikidō, eds., *Bukkyō-Indo shisō jiten* 仏教·インド思想辞典 (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1987), 54b-55b (Hirai Shun'ei 平井俊栄); and Whalen Lai, "Limits and Failure of *ko-i* (Concept-Matching) Buddhism," *History of Religions*, 18.3 (February 1979): 238–57.

59. Tsukamoto Zenryū 塚本善隆, *Shina Bukkyō shi kenkyū: Hokugi hen* 支那佛教史研究: 北魏篇 (Kyoto: Kōbundō, 1942), 25–34.
60. Ibid., 18–25.
61. For example, Kameta Shigeo 鎌田茂雄, *Chūgoku Bukkyō shi* 中国仏教史, Iwanami zensho 岩波全書, 310 (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1978, rpt. 1979), 32.
62. Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy, vol. II: The Period of Classical Learning (from the Second Century B.C. to the Twentieth Century C.E.)*, trans. Derk Bodde (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), 241.
63. Ibid., 242, n. 1.
64. Kung-chuan Hsiao, *A History of Chinese Political Thought*, vol. I: *From the Beginnings to the Sixth Century C.E.*, trans. F. W. Mote (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 657, n. 110.
65. Ibid., 741a.
66. Arthur E. Link, "Shyh Daw-an's Preface to Sangharaksa's *Yogācārabhūmi-sūtra* and the Problem of Buddho-Taoist Terminology in Early Chinese Buddhism," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 77 (1957), 4, n. 11 (full essay, 1–14); cf. Link, "Biography of Shih Tao-an," 45.
67. Arthur F. Wright, *Buddhism in Chinese History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959), 37.
68. Wing-tsit Chan, trans. and comp., *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 336. For further discussion of *benwu*, see below near the end of this section at n. 87.
69. Kenneth K. S. Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 68–69.
70. For example, Itō Takatoshi, "The Formation of Chinese Buddhism and 'Matching the Meaning' (*geyi* 格義)," trans. Rolf W. Giebel, *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko (The Oriental Library)*, No. 54 (1996): 69, passim (full essay, 65–91).
71. Whalen Lai, "Limits and Failure of *ko-i* (Concept-Matching) Buddhism," 238.
72. Robert Shih, *Biographies des moines éminents*, 74 and n. 57.
73. Leon N. Hurvitz, and Arthur E. Link, "Three Prajñāpāramitā Prefaces of Tao-an," *Mélanges de Sinologie offerts à Monsieur Paul Demiéville*, vol. II, Bibliothèque de l'Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises, XX (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1974), 406 (full essay, 403–70).

74. Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, 12.
75. Ibid., 294.
76. Tsukamoto Zenryū, *A History of Early Chinese Buddhism: From Its Introduction to the Death of Hui-yüan*, translated by Leon Hurvitz, 2 vols. (Tokyo, New York, San Francisco: Kodansha International, 1985; originally published in Japanese as *Chūgoku Bukkyō tsūshi* 中國佛教通史, vol. 1 [Shunjūsha, 1979]), 1:248. Subsequent citations from this work will be given in the text.
77. So far as I am aware, this pairing off of the Buddhist *wu jie* with the non-Buddhist *wu chang* did not occur until the *Tiwei Boli jing* 提謂波利經 (Sutra of Trapusa and Bhallika), written by the Northern Wei (386–535) monk Tanjing 曇靜 sometime between 454 and 464. See Tang Yongtong, "On 'Ko-Yi'," 285–86. Furthermore, there is no indication that Tanjing, in comparing the Buddhist Five Precepts with the non-Buddhist Five Norms, was conscious of engaging in *geyi*. Indeed, there is no reason why he should have been aware of *geyi* because it had been defunct for more than a century, and it was of limited circulation even during its supposed heyday (first half of the fourth century).
78. Ren Jiyu 任繼愈, *Zhongguo Fojiao shi* 中國佛教史, 3 vols. (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue, 1981, 1985, 1988), 201.
79. From the English title of Peng Ziqiang 彭自強, "Cong '*geyi*' dao '*deyi*': Fojiao Boruoxue yu Wei-Jin Xuanxue jiaorong zhuxian" 從「格義」到「得意」: 佛教般若學與魏晉玄學交融的主線 (From "Ge-yi [Subjectively Retelling]" to "De-yi [Objectively Understanding]": Interference Between Prajnaparamita Study and Metaphisics [*sic*] in the Wei-jin [*sic*] Period), *Foxue yanjiu* 佛學研究 8 (1999): 90–99.
80. Robert H. Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism: A Reading of the Treasure Store Treatise*, Studies in East Asian Buddhism, 14 (Honolulu: Kuroda Institute; University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 5, 10, 11, 97–99, 288 n. 12, 309 n. 56.
81. Ibid., 97.
82. Jan Nattier, "Beyond Translation and Transliteration: A New Look at Chinese Buddhist Terms," unpublished paper delivered at the annual meeting of the Western Branch of the American Oriental Society, Portland (October 16, 2004), 10.
83. For a note on the Confucian *wuwei*, as it occurs in *Analects* 15.5, see E. Bruce Brooks and A. Taeko Brooks, *The Original Analects: Sayings of Confucius and His Successors* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 131. To gain an appreciation of the broad usage of the term *wuwei* among various schools and in various texts (e.g., *Laozi*, *Zhuangzi*, *Huainanzi* 淮南子, *Li ji* 禮記, *Chunqiu fanlu* 春秋繁露, etc.), see *HDC* 7.138ab.
84. See Stefano Zacchetti, "An early Chinese translation corresponding to Chapter 6 of the *Peṭakopadesa*; An Shigao's *Yin chi ru jing* T 603 and its Indian original: a preliminary survey," *Bulletin of the School*

of Oriental and African Studies, 65, no. 1 (2002): 87 (full essay, 74–98) for some precisely documented examples. In truth, however, *wuwei* eventually came to be used as a translation for a number of other Sanskrit terms whose meanings it more nearly fits: *asamskrta, akrta, anadhvan, anabhisamskāra, anabhisamskrtava, anutpāda, asamskāra, asamskrtatva, asamskrta-dharma, asamskrta-pada, asanga, nisprapañca*. See Hirakawa Akira 平川彰, *Bukkyō kanbun daijiten* 佛教漢梵大辭典 (Tokyo: Reiyukai, 1997), 776ab.

85. Zhu Qingzhi and Mei Weiheng (Victor H. Mair), *Diyuan Yunlai* (see note 34 above), 310b. For notes on the Daoist *wuwei* and its parallels in various Sanskrit concepts, see Victor H. Mair, trans. and ed., *Tao Te Ching: The Classic Book of Integrity and the Way* (New York: Bantam, 1990), 138, 142.
86. Zhu Qingzhi and Mei Weiheng, *Diyuan Yunlai*, 302a-314c.
87. In the hundreds of occurrences of *ben wu* that are to be found in texts dating from the Pre-Qin period to the Six Dynasties, it is only in Buddhist texts that it fuses as *benwu* to become a technical term meaning "fundamental nothingness" or "original nonbeing." There simply is no correlation between Daoist texts and *benwu* as a technical term. Furthermore, its chief function during the Eastern Jin was as an effective synonym for *prajñā*, but it also was used at various times to render the following Sanskrit terms: *abhūta, amūla, apūrva, tathatā,* and *śūnya*. Thus, far from being a Daoist technical term borrowed by Buddhism, *benwu* was created by the Buddhists themselves.
88. Wing-tsit Chan, *Source Book*, 336.
89. Jan Nattier, "How to Do Things with Translations: Methodological Reflections on Working with Early Chinese Buddhist Texts," unpublished paper delivered at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Toronto (November 25, 2002); also personal communications, December 13, 2004 and October 11, 2007.
90. In 1980, Erik Zürcher published an article entitled "Buddhist Influence on Early Taoism," *T'oung Pao*, 66.1-3: 84–147. This is one of his most significant studies, but it is also perhaps the most overlooked. It is a substantial and extremely well-documented piece of research. In this article, Zürcher demonstrates massive, pervasive borrowing from Buddhism in the formation of religious Daoism. He notes, but does not similarly document, that there must also have been some influence from Daoism upon early Buddhism, and that the two religions undoubtedly developed together in a relationship of mutual exchange. In a companion article, which Zürcher explicitly describes (p. 1) as "an attempt to redress the balance," he shows that there was indeed a "Taoist counter-current." See his "'Prince Moonlight': Messianism and Eschatology in Early Medieval Chinese Buddhism," *T'oung Pao* 68, no. 1–3 (1982): 1–75. Nonetheless, viewed strictly as a process of historical interaction, it was Buddhism's advent in China that triggered the rise of Daoism as

an organized religion (or, more precisely, as a congeries of religious movements that gradually evolved into a complex body of orthopraxis, monastic and lay institutions, rituals, texts, iconography, and so forth).

91. For example, Zhou Daxing (Chow Ta-hsing) 周大興, "Ziran huo yinguo—cong Dong-Jin Xuan-Fo zhi jiaoshe tan qi" 自然或因果一從東晉玄佛之交涉談起, *Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiu jikan* 中國文哲研究集刊 (Bulletin of the Institute for Literature and Philosophy) 22 (March 2003): 91–126.
92. Liu Lifu 劉立夫, "Lun geyi de benyi ji qi yinshen" 論格義的本義及其引伸, *Zongjiao xue yanjiu* 宗教學研究 2 (2000): 76–82.
93. Itō Takatoshi, "The Formation of Chinese Buddhism and 'Matching the Meaning' (*geyi* 格義)," 74.
94. It is an article of faith among even otherwise respectable historians of Chinese Buddhism that *geyi* was an essential translation technique. For example, see Kenneth Ch'en, *Buddhism in China*, 68–69; Charles D. Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom: The Scripture for Humane Kings in the Creation of Chinese Buddhism* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978), 170–71.

9

The *Buddharāja* Image of Emperor Wu of Liang

Kathy Cheng-Mei Ku

In 1999, the Taiwanese scholar Yan Shangwen published a book entitled *Liang Wudi* 梁武帝. Yan's book is the most detailed study on the "Emperor-Bodhisattva" policy of Emperor Wu (Xiao Yan 蕭衍, r. 502–549) of the Liang dynasty (502–557). In the conclusion, he says:

> Emperor Wu of Liang created a new idea or a policy of "Emperor-Bodhisattva" (皇帝菩薩), which carries both political and religious significance. As an idea, it consists of the Chinese kingship "emperor" (皇帝) and the Indian ideal kingship of "*cakravartin*" (轉輪聖王). This kingship of Emperor Wu is a fusion of the Chinese ideal kingship of the "sagely king" and the Indian ideal kingship of "*cakravartin*." It can be understood as a syncretism of three teachings in one (三教合一), i.e., a combination of Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism; or a politico-religious policy (政教合一), or even a policy in which he ruled his state with the image of "Emperor-Bodhisattva," hoping to establish a "Buddhist empire" (佛教帝國), or to unite the North and the South after a long period of disunion.[1]

Yan's understanding of Emperor Wu's kingship of "Emperor-Bodhisattva" is evidently influenced by Arthur F. Wright, who also regards the idea of "Emperor-Bodhisattva" as being derived from a fusion of Chinese and Buddhist political ideals. Wright says,

> He [Emperor Wu of Liang] patterned himself after the new Buddhist model of kingly behavior, and his efforts won him titles which suggest the fusion of Chinese and Buddhist political sanctions. He was called *Huang-ti p'u-sa* ["Huangdi pusa"] (Emperor Bodhisattva皇帝菩薩), *Chiu-shih p'u-sa* ["Jiushi pusa"] (Savior Bodhisattva 救世菩薩), and *P'u-sa t'ien-tzu* ["Pusa tianzi"] (Bodhisattva Son of Heaven 菩薩天子).[2]

The idea of "Emperor-Bodhisattva" is "the new Buddhist model of kingly behavior," which recognizes Emperor Wu as both the "Indian *Cakravartin-rāja*" and the "*Mahādānapati*."[3] Wright does not say much about Emperor Wu's "Cakravartin-rājaship"; he simply defines it as "the king who rules well and successfully through devotion to Buddha and his teaching."[4] Yan, on the other hand, has explained Emperor Wu's cakravartinship in some detail. He notes that it was greatly influenced by King Aśoka (r. third century BCE), including the emperor's act of "giving himself" (*sheshen* 捨身) to the Buddhist *saṇgha* as a *mahādānapati*,[5] or a great patron of Buddhism (*datanyue* 大檀越). Further, Emperor Wu's religious and political policies were similar to those carried out by King Aśoka. While King Aśoka was regarded as a model of *cakravartin*, Emperor Wu was addressed as the "Golden *Cakrī cakravartin*" (金輪轉輪聖王).[6]

A Buddhist *cakravartin* is one who rules his state according to Buddhist beliefs. Most commonly, the kingship is based on the inculcation of the ten wholesome dharmas (十善法 or 十善道) in Buddhism.[7] The concept of "*cakravartin*" recurs in Mahāyāna texts since the very beginning of the Mahāyāna Buddhist movement. It is also called "*dharmarājika*" or "*dharmarāja*" (法王)[8] and is well defined in the *Mahāsatya-nirgrathaputra-vyākarana-sūtra*大薩遮尼乾子所說經 as follows:

> O Great King, you should know that there are four types of kings: (1) the *cakravartin*, (2) the less important king, (3) the next less important king, and (4) the king who rules at the fringe of the territory. Among *cakravartins*, there is one type that does not only observe the ritual of showering the head [i.e., the ritual of enthronement], but also rules the four continents of the universe. His cakravartinship is the most supreme and unsurpassed because he is the protector of the dharma,

or *dharmarājika*. A *cakravartin* is well equipped with seven treasures; they are: (1) the treasure of woman, (2) the treasure of *Moni* jewel, (3) the treasure of *cakrī,* (4) the treasure of elephant, (5) the treasure of horse, (6) the treasure of the chief minister, and (7) the treasure of the minister in charge of treasures. With these seven treasures, wherever the *cakravartin* goes in this world, he shall neither encounter any enemy, nor meet with any trouble or sword-fighting. With the right dharma, he treats everyone equally without prejudice and pacifies those who have surrendered.

The king says: "O Great Master, why is it that a *cakravartin* is called the ruler of the four continents of the universe?"

"Because he rules over the four continents, he attains perfect freedom."

"O Great Master," the king asks, "Why, then, is the cakravartinship the most supreme and unsurpassed?"

"O Great King, it is because no one will disobey his instructions and orders."

"O Great Master, what does it mean by 'the protector of the dharma'?" asked the king.

"O Great King, it is because by his observance of the ten wholesome dharmas, a *cakravartin* can prevent evil deeds, such as killing, so he is called the protector of the dharma."

"O Great Master," the king goes on to ask, "What does it mean by *dharmarājika* or *dharmarāja*?"

"O Great King, it is because a *cakravartin* transforms the four continents of the universe with the ten wholesome dharmas, his people will all observe them, thereby avoiding ten evil deeds. This is why he is called *dharmarājika*."

大王當知, 王有四種: 一者轉輪王、二者少分王、三者次少分王、四者邊地王。轉輪王者, 有一種轉輪王, 謂灌頂刹利統四邊畔, 獨尊最勝護法法王。彼轉輪王七寶具足。何等七寶? 一者夫人寶。二者摩尼寶。三者輪寶。四者象寶。五者馬寶。六者大臣寶。七者主藏寶。彼轉輪王, 如是七寶具足成就, 遍行大地無有敵對, 無有怨刺, 無有諸惱, 無諸刀仗, 依於正法, 平等無偏, 安慰降伏。」王言:「大師, 云何名為轉輪聖王, 統四邊畔?」答言:「大王, 以王四天下, 得自在故。」王言。大師。云何名為獨尊最勝?」答言:「大王, 所出教令, 無違逆故。」王言:「大師。云何護法?」答言;「大王, 修十善法, 不令邪法殺生等壞, 名為護法。」王言:「大師, 云何法王?」答言:「大王, 轉輪聖王以十善道化四天下, 悉令受持, 離十惡業。行十善道, 具足成就。名為法王。[9]

In order to rule the state with Buddhist beliefs or the ten wholesome dharmas, Emperor Wu not only twice performed the ritual of the Bodhisattva *pratimokṣa* (菩薩戒儀), but encouraged his subjects to do the same as well. This ritual is an initiation of practicing the *Bodhisattva-caryā* (菩薩道) which requires the observance of the ten wholesome dharmas.[10]

Even though Chinese Buddhist sources mention that Emperor Wu twice performed the ritual of the Bodhisattva *pratimokṣa*, Yan Shangwen mentions only the second ritual, which took place on the Buddha's birthday, that is, the eighth day of the fourth month, in the eighteenth year of the Tianjian 天監 reign (519).[11] He completely ignores the first ritual performed on the same day in the third year of the same reign (504).

The First Ritual of the Bodhisattva *Pratimokṣa*

It is said that in the first ritual, Emperor Wu together with twenty thousand monks and ordinary people (*daosu* 道俗) generated *bodhicitta* (發菩提心) and discarded the teachings of Laozi (*Lao dao* 老道) at the Chongge Pavilion (重閣) of Chongyun Palace (重雲殿). The detail of this ritual is stated in the "Edict on abandoning the promotion of the teachings of Laozi" (捨事老道法詔) written by Emperor Wu himself.[12] According to the edict, Emperor Wu had implemented the Daoist political ideology to rule his state in the beginning of his reign. Later, he regretted this and decided to adopt the Buddhist political ideology instead. Zhipan's 志磐 *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統記 describes Emperor Wu's activities in the first ritual as follows:

> On the eighth day of the fourth month, the Emperor himself composed an essay at Chongyun Palace. He brought with him twenty thousand officials and ordinary people to generate *bodhicitta* and to discard the Daoist religion for good. His essay says, "I wish to be ordained as a young monk in my future life in order to promote Buddhism widely so that all sentient beings will gain enlightenment with me. I would rather sink forever in the evil paths as a Buddhist than attain temporary rebirth in heaven as a follower of the teachings of Laozi."
> 四月八日, 帝於重雲殿親製文。率群臣士庶二萬人, 發菩提心, 永棄道教。其文云:「願使未來生世童真出家, 廣弘經教, 化度含識, 同成佛道。寧在正法中長淪惡道, 不樂依老子教暫得生天。」[13]

The emperor's first performance of the ritual was significant because he took the occasion to announce his implementation of Buddhist political ideology to replace Daoism. After the ritual, Xiao Lun 蕭綸, Prince Shaoling 邵陵王 (d. 551), allegedly wrote a letter to the emperor to praise his conversion to Buddhism. It says,

> Your minister Lun has heard that the face of *Tathāgata* sits magnificently on the head, and his subtle body appears magnificently in the boundless space. With the golden *cakrī* (wheel) he enlightens all beings. . . . Having reaped the wonderful fruit of *nirvāṇa*, rafted through the sea of sufferings of rebirth, and attained the permanent bliss at the other shore, he is able to shower compassionate clouds and bestow nectar rain upon seven places and eight assemblies. [Your] transformation of the [people] is inexhaustible. . . . We are at the [right] time meeting with the "Emperor-Bodhisattva" who rules the people in accordance with [the will of] Heaven. . . . By using [your] irresistible eloquence . . . [and] the vow you had made in the past, you save all sentient beings.
> 臣綸聞, 如來嚴相巍巍架于有頂, 微妙色身蕩蕩顯乎無際。假金輪而啟物 … 收涅槃之妙果, 汎生死之苦海, 濟常樂於彼岸, 故能降慈悲雲, 垂甘露雨, 七處八會。教化之義不窮 … 屬值皇帝菩薩應天御物 … 垂無礙辯 … 以本願力, 攝受眾生。[14]

Japanese scholars such as Naito Tatsuo, Ota Teizo, and Kamata Shigeo believe that this letter was either a forgery or written much later. This is because some of the persons mentioned therein, including Prince Lun himself, were either too young or yet to be born at that time.[15] Kamata even questions the historicity of the edict.[16] Yan Shangwen shares this view and thus ignores the importance of the first ritual. He suggests that it would be more reasonable to date the letter to 519 when the second ritual took place.[17]

However, there is evidence that the first ritual did take place in 504. The importance of the first ritual cannot be ignored, for this was the occasion on which Emperor Wu and his people took the Bodhisattva *pratimokṣa* for the first time, and the emperor's cakravartinship was confirmed.

When Emperor Wu planned to perform the second ritual, we learn from the "Biography of Shi Fayun" that Shi Fayun 釋法雲 (467–529)

refused to participate. According to Yan Shangwen, this was because Shi Fayun was disappointed that the monk Huiyue 慧約 (452–535) was put in charge of the ritual as the "Wise One" (*zhi zhe* 智者). [18] However, Yan is mistaken. Shi Fayun was actually the most influential monk in Emperor Wu's court, especially in the early period of his reign. The "Biography of Shi Fayun" attests to his role of being the chief engineer for the promotion of Buddhism around the period of the first ritual (504). It says:

> In the second year of the Tianjian reign (503), Emperor Wu decreed that [Fayun] be in charge of all summons to and outside of the court such that he could initiate an influence on the promotion of Buddhism and advance the benefit of the people from the beginning. Even when the Emperor urgently wanted to call for an assembly to discuss the Buddhist doctrine, he would not issue his decree before he had summoned Yun [for consultation]. At that time, many famous monks and scholars each wrote their commentaries on the *Satyasiddhi śastra*, and Yun put the *Śastra* and the commentaries together into 40 sections in 42 fascicles, and he finished this task swiftly. The Emperor then decreed that Yun give lectures on his work three times in the temples and Buddhist scholars were invited from everywhere to fill the lecture halls. The Emperor also decreed that carts, oxen and porters be fully provided for the invited guests.
> 天監二年, 敕使長召出入諸殿, 影響弘通之端,, 讚揚利益之漸。皇帝亟延義集, 未曾不敕令雲先入, 後下詔令。時諸名德各撰《成實義疏》, 雲乃經論合撰, 有四十科, 為四十二卷。俄尋究了。又敕於寺三遍敷講, 廣請義學充諸堂宇。敕給傳詔, 車牛吏力皆備足焉。[19]

The above paragraph states very clearly that after Fayun's arrival at the Liang court in 503, he had worked with Emperor Wu closely on the promotion of Buddhism. The first ritual of the Bodhisattva *pratimokṣa* stated in the sources must have taken place one year after Fayun's arrival. Otherwise, Fayun would not have refused to participate in the second ritual performed in 519, nor would the "Biography of Shi Fayun" have said that "Fayun's arrival influenced the beginning of the promotion of Buddhism and its benefit to the people."

Fayun's refusal to participate in the second ritual was thus recorded in his biography:

> Then the Emperor copied various Mahayana Buddhist texts, composed the *Bodhisattva Pratimokṣa*, and built the Dharma Hall for Enlightenment. He designated Master Huiyue of Caotang Temple to be the Wise One, from whom he directly received the great *Bodhisattva Pratimokṣa* in order to dignify himself. Since then, aristocrats, courtiers, monks and laity flocked to the capital. Even those who were older than the Wise One were attracted to him to receive the precepts as if driven by wind. Yun said: "This *pratimokṣa* , after all, is the same as the one that I had taken before with you all. If I were going to do it again, it would not be because the ritual is any different this time, but I would be merely following the fashion of the day." He thereupon insisted [on his dissent]. The Emperor repeatedly resorted to all kinds of means to persuade him [to take part in the ritual].
>
> 帝抄諸方等經, 撰《受菩薩法》, 構等覺道場。請草堂寺慧約法師以為智者, 躬受大戒, 以自莊嚴。自茲厥後, 王侯、朝士、法俗傾都。或有年臘過於智者, 皆望風奄附, 啟受戒法。雲曰:「戒終是一, 先已同稟。今重受者, 誠非所異, 有若趣時。」於是固執, 帝累勸獎。[20]

By Daoxuan's account, clearly, not only had the emperor himself composed *Bodhisattva Pratimokṣa*, but Fayun also had observed the same ritual with the emperor and others before, and that the content of the first Bodhisattva *pratimokṣa* must have been the same as that of the second one. The first ritual must have been held in 504 as the records suggest; there is no reason to question its historicity as well as that of Emperor Wu's edict. Despite his doubt about the first ritual, Yan Shangwen notes that Emperor Wu's image as both a Buddha and a *cakravartin* is already mentioned in the "*Foji xu*" 佛記序 (Preface to the *Records of the Buddha*), which was written by Shen Yue 沈約 (441–513) before the twelfth year of the Tianjian reign (512).[21] In this Preface, Emperor Wu was depicted as a Buddha "with ten titles" (十號在躬), who "has the same identity with this *cakravartin*" (同此轉輪).[22] This shows that Emperor Wu had already been regarded as both a Buddha and a *cakravartin* before the second ritual took place in 519.

It is important to know the nature and significance of the ritual of the Bodhisattva *pratimokṣa* when we talk about Emperor Wu's cakravartinship. As Yan points out, "[W]ith the ritual, Emperor Wu could elevate himself to a perfect and divine (聖神) status as an "Emperor-

Buddha" (皇帝佛). Meanwhile, Emperor Wu's cakravartinship would have the effect of reducing the power of the *saṅgha* in a tradition that did not respect the authority of the sovereign. Furthermore, the implementation of the policy under the ritual performed by Emperor Wu would turn the state into an ideal "Buddhist kingdom."[23]

Yan does not clearly explain why, through this ritual, Emperor Wu could fashion himself as a Buddha or turn his state into a Buddhist one. To see the reason, we need to investigate the nature of the ritual and the text in accordance with which the Bodhisattva *pratimokṣa* was performed.

Theoretically, when Emperor Wu observed the ritual of the Bodhisattva *pratimokṣa* for the first time in 504, he could have already regarded himself as a Buddhist *cakravartin*, for his edict stated that he replaced Daoist teachings with Buddhist political ideology on this occasion and he began to rule his state with Buddhist beliefs as a Buddhist *cakravartin*. However, he still needed an official endorsement of his cakravartinship, and this was given with the ritual of the Bodhisattva *pratimokṣa* . There are very few sources on the nature of the first ritual. Nevertheless, in the records that remain of the second ritual, we can still find out the significance of the first ritual to Emperor Wu's cakravartinship. In this connection, what remains of the *Bodhisattva Pratimokṣa* compiled in the Liang and the *Brahmajāla-sūtra* 梵網經 (on which the composition of the *Bodhisattva Pratimokṣa* of the Liang was based) are particularly important.

The *Bodhisattva Pratimokṣa* of Liang and the *Brahmajāla-sūtra*

Suwa Gijun suggests that the compilation of the *Bodhisattva Pratimokṣa* of Liang took seven years (512–519) to complete.[24] It was originally compiled for both laymen and members of the *saṅgha*. Most of the rules and rites in this text are lost. To understand its compilation, we have to rely on Pelliot chinois 2196, that is, Scroll 1 of the *Bodhisattva Pratimokṣa for the Members of the Saṅgha* 出家人受菩薩戒法卷第一 (hereafter, Scroll 1 of the *Pratimokṣa*).[25] This text says:

> There are many redactions of the *Bodhisattva Pratimokṣa*. [For instance,] we have the *Bodhisattva Pratimokṣa* translated by Kumārajīva and the *Bodhisattva Pratimokṣa* orally transmitted

> by Tanjing of Gaochang. Kumārajīva's version was based upon the *Brahmajāla*, while the Gaochang version was said to be based upon the [*Pusa*] *dichi jing* compiled by Maitreya which was also called the *Brahmajāla*. [The other redactions include] one composed by Xuanchang of Changsha Temple; one practiced in the capital which was based on the *Bodhisattva-caryā-nirdeśa*; one based on the *Yingluo benye jing*; and still one based on the *Guan Puxian xing jing*. Roughly there are six redactions. . . . Now the present redaction is not restricted to any single text; rather, it is based on excerpts from scriptures that can corroborate with one another. Wherever full details may not be available in them, [I will] consult other sources. [Nothing is added] without reference. [I] dare not insist on my own opinion or fabricate any detail. I only put things in order in this text called the *Bodhisattva Pratimokṣa for Laity*.
>
> 撰菩薩戒法, 乃有多家。鳩摩羅什所出《菩薩戒法》, 高昌曇景口所傳手[授]《菩薩戒法》。羅什是用《梵網經》, 高昌云彌勒所集《地持經》, 亦《梵網經》, 長沙寺玄暢所撰《菩薩戒法》, 京師亦有依《優婆塞戒法》, 復有依《瓔珞本業經》撰《菩薩戒法》, 復有依《觀普賢行經》撰《菩薩戒法》。粗是所見, 略出六家 … 今所撰次, 不定一經, 隨經所出, 採以爲證。於其中間, 或有未具, 參以所聞, 不無因緣。不敢執己懷抱, 妄有所作。唯有撰次, 是自身立集, 為《在家出家受菩薩戒法》。[26]

The text states very clearly that the emperor had compiled the *Bodhisattva Pratimokṣa for Laity*. What we have today is the extant Scroll 1 of the *Pratimokṣa* and the remaining fascicles of the *Brahmajāla-sūtra,* to wit, Scroll 10 of the *Brahmajāla (Fanwang jing lushenafo shuo pusa xindijiepin dishijuan* 梵網經盧舍那佛說菩薩心地戒品第十卷). The latter consisting of two fascicles or parts was translated by Kumārajīva.

According to the *Bodhisattva Pratimokṣa* recorded in the *Brahmajāla-sūtra*, the main reason to perform the ritual is to take the three refuges (三皈依) and to observe the ten *pratimokṣas* (十戒).[27] The "three refuges" refer to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the *Saṅgha*. The "ten *pratimokṣas*" refer to the ten wholesome dharmas.[28] A Buddhist *cakravartin* rules the state with the ten wholesome dharmas or ten *pratimokṣas*. For Emperor Wu to become a *cakravartin* ruling over a Buddhist state, it was necessary for him to observe the ritual of the Bodhisattva *pratimokṣa*. This was why during the first ritual, as it was reported, "twenty thousand officials and ordinary people generated *bodhicitta*" with him.

Thus, the ritual was important to Emperor Wu and his subjects for the purpose of establishing a Buddhist kingdom in the Liang. Even more important, Emperor Wu needed an official ritual endorsement of his Buddhist cakravartinship. According to the *Brahmajāla-sūtra*, it is only by virtue of the ritual of the Bodhisattva *pratimokṣa* that a *cakravartin* can ascend the throne:

> When a Buddhist assumes the throne as king or *cakravartin*, or when officials take their posts, they should first observe the ritual of the Bodhisattva *pratimokṣa*. All deities then will save and protect the king as well as the officials.
> 若佛子, 欲受國王位時, 受轉輪王位時, 百官受位時, 應先受菩薩戒。一切鬼神救護王身、百官之身。[29]

In this light, the receipt of the first ritual in 504 must have been intended to legitimize Emperor Wu's cakravartinship. As such, the image of Emperor Wu as a Buddha, a *cakravartin* as well as an "Emperor-Bodhisattva" was consummated on this special occasion. The letter written by Prince Shaoling therefore needs to be reexamined. Even if it were a forgery or written later as some Japanese scholars have suggested, the Buddhist epithets and images mentioned therein might just as well have been assumed by Emperor Wu after the first ritual.

The *Buddharāja* Kingship of Emperor Wu

The contents of the letter by Prince Shaoling, especially the descriptions of Emperor Wu being both a Buddha and *cakravartin*, are very similar to that of the "Eulogy on the Great Dharma with preface" (大法頌並序), written by the Crown Prince Xiao Gang 蕭綱 (503–551), in the fifth year of the Zhong Datong 中大通 reign (533). The "Eulogy" describes Emperor Wu's status as a Buddha and a *cakravartin* as follows:

> The Emperor has the tranquil *dharmakāya* and keeps the original vow he made in the past. By his magic powers he has descended [i.e., to be incarnated] to this world. . . . On this auspicious day he went to the Tongtai Temple and performed the great service by turning the *dharmacakra*. The temple was built [by the order of] His Majesty; it occupies the site of the [former] Bureau of Law and is now a

> *shanghārāma*. . . . The golden *cakrī* is like the burning sun. . . . There in the temple, [the Emperor,] dressed in the *Tathāgata*'s robe, ascends the lion's seat. . . . Isn't the sagely Emperor's [body] the same as that of the Buddha with its wonderful appearance, and his Buddha power equal to that of the Buddha himself?
> 皇帝以湛然法身不捨本誓, 神力示現, 降應茲土 … 吉日, 將幸同泰大轉法輪。茲寺者我皇之所建立, 改大理之署, 成伽藍之所 … 金輪燭日 … 於是乃披如來之衣, 登師子之座 … 豈非聖主同諸佛身, 降茲妙相, 等諸佛力, 若符契焉?[30]

Just as Prince Shaoling compared the Emperor Wu to *Tathāgata*, Xiao Gang referred to him as an incarnated Buddha and *cakravartin*. In his "Preface to the *Commentary on the Meaning of the Chengshi Lun* Compiled by Dharma Master Min of the Zhuangyan [Temple]" (莊嚴旻法師成實論義疏序), Xiao Gang reiterated the same point; he said, "Because of the vow he had made in his previous life, [the emperor] is now here to transform [the people] in this land" (以本誓願率化斯土).[31]

Xiao Gang frequently used the term "golden *cakrī*" to allude metonymically to the "*cakravartin*." For instance, in his "Lectures and recitations in the Xuanpu Garden with preface" (玄圃園講頌並序), he described Emperor Wu's incarnation thus: "His incarnation is due to the golden *cakrī*" (託應金輪).[32] The golden *cakrī* is one of the seven treasures (七寶) of a Buddhist *cakravartin*.[33] Buddhist sources often mention its importance in this regard.[34] Xiao Gang's descriptions clearly indicate that Emperor Wu was considered an (incarnated) *cakravartin*. These have the same implication as Prince Shaoling's statement that "by the golden *cakrī* the Emperor rules the state."

Finally, in his *Foji*, written before 512, Shen Yue also identified Emperor Wu as an incarnated *Buddharāja* (*Fowang* 佛王), or "the Buddha who is also a *rāja* (*cakravartin*)." Since Emperor Wu's *cakravartin* image was also his *Buddharāja* image, we may surmise that the consummation of the former in 504 also implicated the latter.

Thus, the evidence shows that as a *cakravartin*, Emperor Wu had the image of a Buddha, rather than that of a Bodhisattva as Arthur Wright suggested. Wright says that a *cakravartin* is also a *Mahādānapati*, "whose gifts to the Buddhist order for the benefit of his fellow creatures make of him something akin to a living Bodhisattva."[35] Apparently, this is how Wright would explain the idea of "Emperor-Bodhisattva." In fact, the idea is derived from the ritual of the Bodhisattva *pratimokṣa*.

Oftentimes, Emperor Wu was also addressed as "Emperor-Bodhisattva" in Chinese Buddhist sources. For instance, the "Biography of Xiao Yan" 蕭衍 in the *Wei shu* 魏書 (History of Wei) states:

> [Xiao] Yan [Emperor Wu] believed in Buddhism, and he built the Tongtai Temple in Jianye. . . . Every time Yan worshipped the Buddha, he would change his dharma robe to the *kanthā* patch-robe. He ordered the sons of royalty to take the Buddhist precepts, and that anyone who diligently practiced Buddhism would be addressed as Bodhisattva. When his court officials wrote to him, they also addressed him as "Emperor-Bodhisattva."
> 衍崇信佛道, 於建業起同泰寺 … 衍每禮佛, 捨其法服, 著乾陁袈裟, 令其王侯子弟皆受佛誡。有事佛精苦者, 輙加以「菩薩」之號, 其臣下奏表上書, 亦稱衍為「皇帝菩薩」。[36]

It is abundantly clear that the title of "Bodhisattva" 菩薩 was bestowed on those who practiced Buddhism most diligently (*jingku* 精苦). Emperor Wu himself not only constantly promoted Buddhism during his reign, but he also practiced Buddhism to the extent that he led his life almost like a monk. He gave up all kinds of sensuous enjoyments in regard to women, food, and lodging.[37] In addition, he also observed the practice of *dāna* (making offering, in Chinese, *shishe* 施捨 or *gongyang* 供養) by "giving his body" (*sheshen*) to the Tongtai temple four times.[38] Emperor Wu's acts of "giving his body" to the Tongtai temple were, in fact, a very important symbol of his diligent practice of Buddhism. They were not simply the result of a fusion of the ideal Indian cakravartinship and Chinese kingship, as Yan has suggested.[39] They represented the practice of *dāna* or *shishe*. The practice of *dāna* is the most fundamental practice of the six *prajñāpāramitās* of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Mahāyāna Buddhist texts often mention the practice of *dāna*. According to the *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra*, one will not even spare one's life (*bu xi shenming* 不惜身命) when practicing *dāna*.[40]

After the ritual of the Bodhisattva *pratimokṣa*, Emperor Wu often addressed himself as "Pusajie dizi huangdi" (菩薩戒弟子皇帝) or "The Emperor, the disciple who practices the Bodhisattva *pratimokṣa*."[41] This title implies that he had observed the Bodhisattva *pratimokṣa*. When later both Emperor Wen of Chen 陳文帝 (r. 559–566) and Emperor Wen of Sui 隋文帝 (r. 581–604) implemented Buddhist political ideology in

their rulership,[42] they too went through the same ritual and adopted the same title of "Pusajie dizi huangdi" or "Pusajie fodizi huangdi mou" (菩薩戒佛弟子皇帝某).[43] Clearly, this title was not used by Emperor Wu alone.

Given the reasons above, we need to question the views of Wright and Yan. That is, the idea or the title of "Emperor Bodhisattva" is not, as Wright argued, a fusion of the Chinese ideal kingship or "sagely king" and the Indian ideal kingship of "*cakravartin.*" Nor is it a fusion of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism as suggested by Yan. Given the fact that Emperor Wu had implemented the Buddhist political ideology from 504 onward, his kingship thereafter must have been in the style of the Buddhist cakravartinship, or Buddharājaship.

The Image of Buddharāja Maitreya of Emperor Wu

The image of *Buddharāja* may find expression in a variety of specific Buddhas and in the case of Emperor Wu, it was the Buddha Maitreya. In his letter titled "In gratitude of His Majesty for his promise of giving a lecture" (謝上降為開講啟), Xiao Gang the Crown Prince said:

> He who meets no obstacle is *Daci* (Great Mercy), and because of his original vow, he will give a lecture on the *Sanhui jing* in the first month of the coming year.
> 無礙大慈, 不違本誓, 來歲正月, 開說《三慧經》。[44]

One may be tempted to read the first line as "He who meets with no obstacles (i.e., a Buddha) *has daci*." However, we can rule out this reading because a Buddha is usually not described as having "*daci*" in Buddhist literature. Rather, he is often described as having "*dabei*" 大悲 (*kārunika* or great compassion). In fact, wisdom (*prajñā*) and great compassion are two virtues exclusive only to the Buddha; they are not attributes of ordinary beings.

Therefore the correct reading of the first line should be: "He who meets no obstacle is called *Daci*." The term "*Daci*" may be rendered into Sanskrit as "*Mahāmaitra*," from which the name of Maitreya was derived.[45] In using the term *Daci* here, Xiao Gang in effect regarded Emperor Wu to be Buddha Maitreya. And his usage was by no means idiosyncratic.

The term *Daci* was used repeatedly in the fifth century to refer to "Buddharāja Maitreya" (彌勒佛王). For instance, in a propaganda document entitled "The Declaration of Tathāgata Daci" (大慈如來告疏)—which was found in July 1947 in Dunhuang 敦煌, with the inscribed date of the third year of the Xing'an 興安 reign (455) of Emperor Wencheng 文成 (r. 452–465) of Northern Wei (386–534)—Tathāgata Daci 大慈如來 or Tathāgata Maitreya was also addressed as "The precious *Rāja* who is also Maitreya" (彌勒寶王).[46] Evidently, the Tathāgata Maitreya mentioned in this propaganda document was a Buddharāja Maitreya.[47]

The image of Emperor Wu was recognized at once as *Buddharāja* and Buddharāja Maitreya incarnate. In Lu Yun's 陸雲 (dates unknown) "Preface to *Lectures on the Prajñā Sūtra Given by the Emperor*," he also used the term *Daci* in a similar way. He described Emperor Wu thus: "The Emperor himself is the true wisdom" (皇帝真智自己) and "his incarnation (*yingwu*) is *Daci* or Maitreya" (大慈應物).[48] In a memorial to request Emperor Wu to deliver a lecture, titled "Qifeng qingshang kaijiang" (啓奉請上開講), Xiao Gang also used the idea of *yingwu* to describe the purpose of Emperor Wu's incarnation. He said, "[The emperor] rules the world with the *cakrī*; he was incarnated in this world for the benefit of [sentient] beings. He did not violate his original vow to enlighten the benighted" (金輪馭世，應跡有爲，俯存利物。不違本誓，開導愚蒙).[49] Thus, it is evident that the image of Emperor Wu was recognized as a *Buddharāja* and Buddharāja Maitreya incarnate at once.

The Belief of Buddharāja Maitreya in the South

It should be noted that the practice of self-fashioning into the image of Buddharāja Maitreya did not begin with Emperor Wu himself. The Buddhist beliefs of the Liang, including activities such as the "Assembly of holy monks under the *Nāgapuspa* tree" (龍花聖僧之會), were basically inherited from the Song 宋 (420–479) and the Qi (479–502) dynasties that preceded it.[50] For instance, the *Chu sanzang jiji* 出三藏記集 mentions that Emperor Ming of Song 宋明帝 (r. 465–472) composed the "Essay on the vow made under the *Nāgapuspa* tree" (龍華誓願文), and Prince Jingling Wenxuan of Qi 齊竟陵文宣王 (460–494) also composed an essay called "Account of the assembly under the

Nāgapuspa tree" (龍華會記).[51] According to the *Sūtra of Maitreya in Descension* (彌勒下生經), the incarnate Buddha Maitreya was believed to have attained enlightenment and preached to sentient beings under the Nāgapuspa (Dragon Flower) tree (龍花樹).[52] In this regard, the *Nāgapuspa* tree was associated with the belief in the incarnation of Buddha Maitreya.

The belief in the incarnation of Buddha Maitreya promoted during the Liu-Song and Qi periods was certainly not a mere religious belief. In light of what Emperor Wu of Liang did later in propagating this same belief, we know that the Buddha Maitreya belief (or, more specifically, Buddharāja Maitreya) and other activities under the *Nāgapuspa* tree had political significance in the south. Hence, the belief in Emperor Wu as Buddharāja Maitreya can be better appreciated in the context of a Buddhist political tradition that goes back to the Liu-Song dynasty.

The spread of the Buddharāja Maitreya belief in South China has long been attributed to Shi Faxian 釋法顯 of the Liu-Song dynasty, who, according to the *Biography of Shi Faxian*, went to India in 400 and returned in 415.[53] Li Daoyuan 酈道元 (d. 527) observes in his notes on River Si 泗水, "The *Nāgapuspa* Temple 龍華寺 is located west of River Si. Monk Faxian went on a distant journey to the Western regions and traveled back east by sea with the *Nāgapuspa* Painting (*Longhua tu* 龍華圖). The spread of this dharma in China began with Faxian."[54]

Chinese archeologist Su Bai suggests that the *Nāgapuspa* Painting in question depicts Buddha Maitreya's enlightenment under the *Nāgapuspa* tree.[55] After Faxian's promotion of the belief in South China, Daojiao 道矯 from the same *Nāgapuspa* Temple and Zhu Chuansun 朱舛孫 from Jiankang 建康 together built a Buddhist temple with three halls in the sixteenth year of the Yuanjia 元嘉 reign (439) of Emperor Wen 文 of Song (r. 424–453). Inside, they installed a seated image, 1.6 *zhang* 丈 in height, of Buddha Maitreya in *pralambapādasana* or the European seated posture (倚坐相).[56] In light of this record, it is possible that the *Nāgapuspa* Painting brought back by Faxian could have been a seated image of Buddha Maitreya in *pralambapādasana* as well. Faxian's and Daojiao's promotion and installation of the seated image of Buddha Maitreya in *pralambapādasana* marked the inception of such representation of Buddharāa Maitreya in South China.

When Empress Wu Zetian 武則天 promoted the same belief to rule the Great Zhou (690–705), she also used the seated image in

pralambapādasana to be her distinct image of Buddharāja Maitreya. Such depiction can be observed in the following: the Northern Great Image (敦煌北大像) made in the second year of the Yanzai 延載 period (695) in Dunhuang;[57] the seated image of Buddharāja Maitreya on the central wall of the Middle Cave of Leigu Tai in Longmen (龍門擂鼓台中洞正壁彌勒三尊像);[58] and the seated images of Buddharāja Maitreya in *pralambapādasana* made for the ritual of the Qibaotai 七寶臺, or the Tower of the Seven Jewels, in the third year of the Chang'an 長安 reign (703).[59]

Besides the use of this image in the early Liu-Song to represent Buddharāja Maitreya, the three seated Buddhas or three assemblies of Buddha Maitreya (彌勒三尊/三衆) in the *Sūtra of Maitreya in Descension* were constantly used to promote the belief in the incarnation of Buddharāja Maitreya (彌勒佛王下生). For instance, on the aureole of the seated Buddha in *dhyāna* or meditation posture made in the twenty-eighth year of the Yongjia 永嘉 period (451), we find three seated Buddhas at the three points of a triangle. This marks the seated Buddha as a Buddha Maitreya.[60]

The Extant Buddhist Steles and Images of the Liang

So far, not many art works have been found in relation to Emperor Wu's Buddhist activities. But interestingly, most of the extant steles and images of the Liang found in the Dafo si 大佛寺 of Chengdu 成都 in 1954[61] are related to the Maitreya belief of that period. Among them, a stele depicting "Sumeru in the front and Maitreya Paradise at the back" is evidently a work of the Maitreya tradition. At the rear top center, we find an image of the "Bodhisattva Maitreya" (彌勒菩薩). Seated in a cross-legged posture (交脚坐), it wears a crown, and has many attendants on either side. Below him on the lower part of the stele, three seated Buddhas or three assemblies of Buddha Maitreya are depicted at three points of a triangle.[62]

A design similar to what has just been described is also found in the wall paintings done after the early Tang at the Mogao caves莫高窟 of Dunhuang. I refer especially to the northern wall of cave no. 329[63] and the southern wall of cave no. 331. One difference between these wall paintings and the Liang stele is that not only do the "Bodhisattva Maitreya" images on the wall paintings wear a crown but they are all garbed in Buddha's robe and seated in *pralambapādasana*.[64]

The southern wall of cave no. 148 (dug during the reign of Emperor Daizong of Tang 唐代宗, r. 762–779) at the same site has an inscription beneath the seated Buddha at the top center: "Doushuaituo tiangong" 兜率陀天宮, or "Tuṣita Heaven."[65] Because of this, Li Yumin suggests that after the early Tang, there was no longer any difference between the Bodhisattva Maitreya belief and the Buddha Maitreya belief, and their pictorial depictions were also the same.[66] In other words, the image of Bodhisattva Maitreya might also be depicted as the robe-garbed Buddha Maitreya. Based on this, Li also suggests that the wall painting from cave no. 148 may be called "Integrated Painting of the *Sūtra of Maitreya in Ascension*[67] and the *Sūtra of Maitreya in Descension*" (上下生經合繪圖).[68]

Zhao Shengliang reported the aforementioned stele of the Liang in the *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 (Dunhuang Studies). He suggested that the design on the back was also an example of "Integrated Pictorial Presentation of the *Sūtra of Maitreya in Ascension* (彌勒上生經) and the *Sūtra of Maitreya in Descension*."[69] Angela F. Howard, too, holds the same view.[70]

I take a different view. After comparing the art works and inscriptions of Empress Wu Zetian and Dvaravati 墮和羅 (sixth to eleventh century) of Siam, I found that the so-called "Integrated Pictorial Presentation of the *Sūtra of Ascension* and the *Sūtra of Descension*" in both places is, in fact, a presentation of the belief and the image of Buddharāja Maitreya.[71]

My finding is based on two points: (1) Textually, the iconography of the seated posture with two legs crossed at ankles (交腳坐相) is known as a *cakravartin*'s seated posture (輪王坐相); and (2) In the "descension belief of Maitreya" stated in the *Puxian pusa shuo zhengming jing* 普賢菩薩說證明經 (hereafter, the *Zhengming jing*, a text that Empress Wu Zetian had used to depict her self-image of Buddharāja Maitreya),[72] Buddharāja Maitreya is said to descend to this world from Tuṣita Heaven.[73]

The *Vajrasekhara-ekāksara-buddhoshnisha-cakravartin-dhyāya-kalpa* (abbreviated hereafter as *Vajrasekhara*) 金剛頂一字頂輪王瑜珈一切時處念誦成佛儀軌, translated by Amoghavajra 不空金剛 (705–774), states that a *cakravartin* has three seated postures: (1) two legs crossed at ankles (交腳), (2) one leg hanging (垂一), and (3) one leg straight (獨膝竪).[74] We may conclude from this that the seated image on the back of the Liang stele—wearing a crown with two legs crossed at ankles—is a Buddhist *cakravartin*'s image.

The *Zhenming jing* says that when Buddha Maitreya descends, he will do so from the *cakrī stūpa* (雀梨浮圖) in Tuṣita Heaven.[75] Many heavenly beings will make offerings to him, such as a precious crown (寶冠), jewels (瓔珞), and the lotus garb (蓮花上衣).[76] Congruent with this, the Maitreya images in the so-called "Integrated Pictorial Presentation of the *Sūtra of Ascension* and the *Sūtra of Descension*" on the walls of the Dunhuang caves referred to above (no. 329, no. 331, and no. 148) all wear a crown and Buddha's robes. Also in accord with this description of the *Zhengming jing*, the cross-legged *cakravartin* of the Liang stele shows Buddha Maitreya descending from Tuṣita Heaven as a *cakravartin* or Buddharāja Maitreya.

In sum, neither the portrayal of the so-called "Integrated Pictorial Presentation of the *Sūtra of Ascension* and the *Sūtra of Descension*" in Dunhuang nor that of the Liang stele by the scholars mentioned above quite stands up to scrutiny. The design on the artifacts under review, in fact, expresses the image and the belief of Buddharāja Maitreya at a particular place and time. Specifically, the design on the back of the Liang stele is not about the "Maitreya Paradise," as has been suggested by scholars. Rather, it is an important piece of evidence that shows that Emperor Wu of Liang was the Buddharāja Maitreya of the time.

We find a design similar to the so-called "Integrated Pictorial Presentation of the *Sūtra of Ascension* and the *Sūtra of Descension*" below the *cakrī stūpa* that is engraved on top of the aureole of the "Stele with twin seated Buddha" of the Liang.[77] The entire design of this stele is very similar to that of a Maitreya altarpiece of the Northern Qi dynasty (550–577) with the inscription that says it is "the white marble image of Maitreya."[78] We may therefore ascertain that this stele also expresses the image and the belief of Buddharāja Maitreya of Emperor Wu.

Besides these Maitreya steles of the Liang found in Sichuan, Buddha Maitreya images of the Liang were also frequently reported. The image carved in Yanxian 剡縣 was the most famous. It was a huge statue made under the supervision of Shi Sengyou 釋僧祐 (445–518) with financial support from the Liang court.[79] It has been identified by Su Bai as a seated image of Buddha Maitreya in *pralambapādasana*.[80] The *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* also mentions that Shi Sengmin 釋僧旻, an eminent monk of the period, had an image of Maitreya made for daily worship.[81] Similarly, a little bronze image of Maitreya in the seated

posture of *pralambapādasana*[82] was said to have been made in the sixth year of the Putong 普通 reign (525) of Emperor Wu of Liang by Gongsun Bocheng 公孫伯成 and his wife. Another stone image of Maitreya was said to have been made in the fourth year of the Datong 大同 reign (532) by Tao Qian 陶遷, the county magistrate of Shanyang 山陽.[83] We may note from all these images that the belief in Buddha Maitreya or Buddharāja Maitreya was indeed prevalent and important in the fifth and sixth centuries.

Conclusion

The identification of and belief in Emperor Wu as Buddharāja Maitreya was inherited from similar practices in the Liu-Song and Qi dynasties in South China. The belief was propagated for religious and political purposes throughout his reign of the Liang. However, it did not represent an infusion of the ideal Chinese kingship and the ideal Indian kingship. Rather, it was a typical expression of Buddhist cakravartinship or Buddharājaship of Maitreya, which was introduced to South China from India by Faxian in the first decades of the fifth century.

Emperor Wu had observed the ritual of the Bodhisattva *pratimokṣa* twice during his reign. If on both occasions he had adopted the same Buddhist belief and the same Buddha image to rule the Liang, it was not necessary for him to observe the second ritual in 519. So, why did he decide to do so? Perhaps the first ritual was held too long ago (in 504). He must have wanted very much to emphasize the practice of the Bodhisattva *pratimokṣa* by repeating the ritual. It is also possible that since the emperor had been involved in the compilation of his own version of the text (a task that took seven years to complete) in preparation for the practice of the Bodhisattva *pratimokṣa*, he might have wished that everyone in the kingdom be guided by his new version of the text.

The Buddharāja Maitreya belief must have been practiced in India before its introduction to China. In terms of its iconography, Buddharāja Maitreya was marked with the seated image in *pralambapādasana* and three seated Buddhas. It has often been said that the iconographical origin of the tradition can be traced back to the period of Ajanta and Ellora in the second half of the fifth century. For instance, Betty Gosling suggests,

> In the late fifth century there had been a sudden eruption of *pralambapādasana* images at Ajanta and its neighboring site, Ellora. From there the convention apparently spread quickly, for they began to have been produced almost simultaneously at Nalanda, where the iconography could have spread to Thailand's Central Plains.[84]

In light of the cases in the south of China during the first half of the fifth century, the tradition might have been established much earlier than suggested. The same tradition might also have been introduced to North China around the same time or even earlier. This can be attested by the earliest caves, such as no. 275 and no. 272, dug in Mogao caves of Dunhuang during the Northern Liang (401–439) period. Similarly, the "Declaration of the Tathāgata Maitreya," a propaganda document, from the Northern Wei found in Dunhuang, also confirms my observation.

The rise of the Buddharāja Maitreya belief may owe to the appearance of the *Zhengming jing*. This text might have been composed on the basis of the Maitreya belief expressed in the *Sūtra of Maitreya in Ascension* and the *Sūtra of Maitreya in Descension*. Nevertheless, the Maitreya belief in the *Zhengming jing* is different from the one in these two scriptures. While the making of artifacts still followed the descriptions in these other texts, the Buddha Maitreya depicted in the *Sūtra of Maitreya in Descension* was *not* a *Buddharāja*, for he did not have the identity of a *cakravartin*. Therefore, we should not mix up this belief with the one in the *Sūtra of Maitreya in Ascension* and the *Sūtra of Maitreya in Descension*.[85]

In the Buddharāja Maitreya belief, a *cakravartin* is also known as the Buddha Maitreya or Buddharāja Maitreya; it is thus not surprising that many extant inscriptions identified the cross-legged *cakravartin* as the image of Maitreya. For example, the inscription on the east wall of the "Ming Chuang" 明窗 by the Buddhist nun Huiding 惠定 in the thirteenth year of the Taihe 太和 reign (489) (cave no. 17 of the Yungang 雲岡 grottoes) indicates that the cross-legged image was Maitreya. A case like this must have been due to the fact that the *cakravartin* image was also an image of Buddharāja Maitreya. It is not simply an image of Maitreya or Bodhisattva Maitreya, as many scholars would have us believe.

Notes

1. Yan Shangwen 顏尚文, *Liang Wudi* (Taipei: Dongda, 1999), 318–19.
2. Arthur F. Wright, *Buddhism in Chinese History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991, rpt. 1959), 51.
3. Ibid., 50–51.
4. Ibid.
5. See discussion below.
6. Yan, *Liang Wudi*, 286.
7. The ten wholesome dharmas refer to the ten moral injunctions of Buddhism, namely, the abstention of killing, stealing, adultery, being two-tongued, scolding, gossiping, flattery, greed, and heresy; see also the definition of *cakravartin* in the *Mahāsatya* discussed below.
8. Ku Cheng-Mei 古正美, *Guishuang fojiao zhengzhi chuantong yu dacheng fojiao* 貴霜佛教政治傳統與大乘佛教 (The Kushan Buddhist Political Tradition and Mahāyāna Buddhism) (Taipei: Yunchen, 1993), 278–85.
9. Bodiruci 菩提留支 (Northern Wei) trans., *Mahāsatya-nirgrathaputra-vy ākarana sūtra*, in Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡邊海旭 eds., *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經 (The Tripitaka in Chinese), 100 vols. (Tokyo: The Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1922–1934), *T.*9 (272) 330a23-b10.
10. Kumārajīva trans., *Brahmajāla-sūtra, Scroll 10* 梵網經盧舍那佛說菩薩心地戒品第十巻, *T.*24 (1484) 1004b11–12.
11. Yan, *Liang Wudi*, 176–77.
12. Daoxuan 道宣, *Guang Hongming ji* 廣弘明集, *T.*52 (2103) 111c24–112c7.
13. *T.*49 (2035) 348c9–13.
14. *Guang Hongming ji*, *T.*52 (2103) 112b8–22.
15. Yan, *Liang Wudi*, 199–207. See also Naito Tatsuo 內藤龍雄, "Ryō Butei no shadō no hishijitsusei" 梁武帝の捨道の非史實性 (The non-historicity of Emperor Wu of Liang's abandonment of *Daojiao*), in *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 印度學佛教學研究, 5.2 (1957): 162–63 and Ota Teizo 太田悌藏, "Ryō Butei no shadō hōbutsu ni tsuite utagau" 梁武帝の捨道奉佛について疑う (Doubts on Emperor Wu of Liang's abandonment of *Daojiao* and adoption of Buddhism), in *Reimon Yūki kyōju shōju kinen (Bukkyo shisō-shi) ronshū* 結成令聞教授頌壽紀念論文集 (Tokyo: Daizo, 1964), 417–32.
16. Kamata Shigeo 鎌田茂雄, *Chūgoku bukkyō shi* 中國佛教史, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1984), 190–94.
17. Yan, *Liang Wudi*, 206.
18. Ibid., 190–202.
19. Daoxuan, *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (Further Biographies of Eminent Monks), in *T.*50 (2060) 464a23–29-b1.
20. *T.*50 (2060) 464c3–9.

21. Yan, *Liang Wudi*, 202–203.
22. *Guang Hongming ji*, *T.*52 (2103) 201b1–2.
23. Yan, *Liang Wudi*, 176–77.
24. Suwa Gijun 諏訪義純, "Ryō Tenran 18-nen chokusha shukkenin ju bosatsu kaihō kan 1 shiron" 梁天監十八年勅寫《出家人受菩薩戒法巻一》試論 (Tentative discussion of Scroll 1 of the *Bodhisattva Pratimoksa for the Members of the Sangha* compiled by decree in the eighteenth year of the Tianjian reign of Liang), in Nagami Toshishizu 野上俊靜, ed., *Tonkō koshakyō zoku* 敦煌古寫經續 (Sequel to the Old Manuscripts of Dunhuang) (Kyoto: Ōtani daigaku tōyōgaku kenkyūshi, 1965–1972), 85–92; see also Yan, *Liang Wudi*, 178.
25. According to Yan Shangwen, P.2196, Scroll 1 of the *Bodhisattva Pratimoksa for the Members of the Sangha*, is collected in the *Dunhuang baozang* 敦煌寶藏, vol. 116, compiled by Huang Yongwu 黃永武. Because the characters of the text are blurred and unclear, Tsuchihashi Hidetaka 土橋秀高 therefore re-punctuated, edited, and published the text in Ryuūkoku daigaku Bukkyō gakkai 龍谷大學佛教學會, ed., *Bukkyōbunken no kenkyū* 佛教文獻の研究 (Kyoto: Hyakkaen, 1968), 93–148; see also Yan, *Liang Wudi*, 178.
26. Quoted in Yan, *Liang Wudi*, 179.
27. Ibid., 181.
28. *Brahmajāla-sūtra, T.*24 (1484) 1004b17–1005a25.
29. Ibid.*, T.*24 (1484) 1005a27-29.
30. *Guang Hongming ji*, *T.*52 (2103) 240a21–241c4.
31. Ibid., *T.*52 (2103) 244b28.
32. Ibid., *T.*52 (2103) 242b5.
33. See Note 9 above.
34. For instance, the *Record of the Western Regions of the Great Tang* 大唐西域記 says, "When a *cakravartin* is about to ascend the throne, by virtue of his merit, the wheel treasure (輪寶), in response, will appear in the air." See *T.*51 (2087) 869b4–6. Here, "wheel treasure" refers to the golden *cakrī*. It may be considered as the most important symbol of a Buddhist *cakravartin*.
35. Wright, *Buddhism in Chinese History*, 51.
36. *Wei shu*, 8 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1984), 2187.
37. In his "Preface to the Emperor's Talk on the *Prajñā(pāramitā) sūtra*" (御講波若經序), Xiao Gang states that the emperor discarded all sensuous enjoyments (*bingqi shengse* 屏棄聲色) and led a simple and frugal life in his reign of more than forty years. He was comfortable with simple vegetarian food, and often went to a small chamber to take his shelter from wind and rain. The place where he sat for ruling the Liang was so small that it could barely accommodate his two knees. See *Guang Hongming ji*, *T.*52 (2103) 235c11–236a.
38. Zhu Mingpang 朱銘盤, *Nanchao Liang huiyao* 南朝梁會要 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1984), 239–40.

39. Yan, *Liang Wudi*, 281.
40. Dharmakṣema trans., *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra* 大般涅槃經, *T.*12 (374) 549b20.
41. See Emperor Wu of Liang, "Jin'gang boruo chanwen" (金剛波若懺文), in *Guang Hongming ji*, *T.*52 (2103) 332b22. As Emperor Wu cared about the observance of the Bodhisattva *pratimokṣa* and was keen on the practice of Mahāyāna Buddhism, he certainly could be addressed as "Bodhisattva" or "Emperor-Bodhisattva," and this explains how he had acquired the epithets of "Emperor-Bodhisattva," "Savior Bodhisattva," and "Bodhisattva Son of Heaven."
42. About the cakravartinship of Emperor Wen of Sui, see my *Cong tianwang chuantong dao fowang chuantong—Zhongguo zhongshi fojiao zhiguo yishi xingtai yanjiu* 從天王傳統到佛王傳統一中國中世佛教治國意識形態研究 (Taipei: Shangzhou, 2003), ch. 4, 155–221.
43. Emperor Xuan 宣 of Chen, "Shengtianwang boruo chanwen" 勝天王般若懺文 in *Guang Hongming ji*, *T.*52 (2103) 332c16. See also Wang Shao 王邵, "Sheli ganying ji" 舍利感應記, in *Guang Hongming ji*, *T.*52 (2103) 214a20.
44. Xiao Gang, "Xie shangjiang wei kaijiang qi" 謝上降為開講啓, in *Guang Hongming ji*, *T.*52 (2103) 234c29–235a1.
45. Wogihara Unrai 荻原雲來 and Tsuji Naoshirō 辻直四郎, eds., *Kan 'yaku taishō Bon-wa daijiten* 漢譯對照梵和大辭典 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng, 1979), 2:1065–66.
46. Wang Huimin 王惠民, "Bei-Wei Fojiao chuantie yuanjian 'Daci rulai gaoshu' yanjiu" 北魏佛教傳帖原件《大慈如來告疏》研究, *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究, 1 (1998): 42–43.
47. See my "Cong 'Daci rulai gaoshu' shuoqi—Bei-Wei Xiaowendi de Yungang Milefowang zaoxiang" 從《大慈如來告疏》說起一北魏孝文帝的雲岡彌勒佛王造像, in Yungang shiku yanjiuyuan 雲岡石窟研究院, ed., *2005 Yungang shiku guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 2005 年雲岡石窟國際學術研討會論文集 (Beijing: Wenwu, 2006), 7–9.
48. Lu Yun, "Yu jiang Boruojing xu yi" 御講波若經序一, in *Guang Hongming ji, T.*52 (2103) 235b19.
49. Xiao Gang, "Qifeng qingshang kaijiang," in *Guang Hongming ji*, *T.*52 (2103) 235a11–12.
50. Sengyou 僧祐, "Fayuan zayuan yuanshiji mulu" 法苑雜緣原始集目錄, in *Chu sanzang jiji* 出三藏記集, *T.55* (2145) 90b13–14.
51. *T.55* (2145) 92b18.
52. Dharmarakṣa 竺法護 trans., *Foshuo Mile xiasheng jing* 佛說彌勒下生經, *T.*14 (453) 421c15.
53. *Gaoseng Faxian zhuan* 高僧法顯傳, *T.*51 (2085) 857–66.
54. Li Daoyuan, *Shuijing zhu* 水經注, annotated by Wang Guowei 王國維 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin, 1984), 820–21.
55. Su Bai 宿白, "Nanchao kanxiang yiji chutan" 南朝龕像遺跡初探, in Su Bai, *Zhongguo shikusi yanjiu* 中國石窟寺研究 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1996), 187.

56. Su Bai, *Zhongguo shikusi yanjiu*, n. 21.
57. Su Bai, "Mogaoku ji" 莫高窟記, in his *Zhongguo shikusi yanjiu*, 200–205.
58. Wen Yucheng 溫玉成, "Longmen Tang dong painian" 龍門唐洞排年, in *Zhongguo shiku: Longmen shiku* 中國石窟: 龍門石窟 , ed. Longmen yanjiusuo (Beijing: Wenwu, 1991), 206.
59. Yan Juanying 顏娟英, "Wu Zetian yu Tang Chang'an Qibaotai shidiao foxiang" 武則天與唐長安七寶台石雕佛相, *Yishu xue* 藝術學 1 (March 1987): 69–73. About the nature and dating of the above mentioned images, see also my "Wu Zetian yu Duoheluo de Milefowang xinyang" 武則天與墮和羅的彌勒佛王信仰, in *2004 nian Longmen shiku guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 2004 年龍門石窟國際學術研討會論文集, ed. Longmen shiku yanjiuyuan 龍門石窟研究院 (Zhengzhou: Henan remin publication, 2006), 597-628.
60. Jin Shen 金申, *Zhongguo lidai jinian foxiang tudian* 中國歷代紀年佛像圖典 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1994), 15, plate 12, "Liu Guozhi zao Fo zuoxiang" 劉國之造佛坐像; see also Ku, "Cong 'Daci rulai gaoshu' shuoqi," 18.
61. Zhao Shengliang 趙聲良, "Chengdu Nanchao fudiao Mile jingbian yu Fahua jing bian kaolun" 成都南朝浮雕彌勒經變與法華經變考論, *Dunhuang yanjiu* 1 (2001): 34–36. See also Angela F. Howard, "Standing Buddha Shakyamuni"; "Stele with bodhisattva (recto) and landscape scenes"; "Stele with Sumeru (recto) and Maitreya Paradise (verso)"; "Stele with twin seated Buddhas"; and "Standing Ashoka-style Buddha"; all in James C. Y. Watt, *China, Dawn of a Golden Age, 200–750 A.D.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 223–29.
62. Watt, *China, Dawn of a Golden Age, 200–750 A.D.*, 225, plate 126 (verso), "Stele with Sumeru (recto) and Maitreya Paradise (verso)."
63. Dunhuang wenwu yanjiusuo ed., *Dunhuang Mogao shiku*, vol. 3 in *Zhongguo shiku* (Beijing: Wenwu, 1987), plate 45, cave no. 329, the northern wall, "The *Maitreya Sutra* Presentation."
64. Wang Huimin 王惠民, ed., *Mile jing hua juan* 彌勒經畫卷, in Dunhuang shiku yanjiuyuan 敦煌石窟研究院, ed., *Dunhuang shiku quanji* 敦煌石窟全集, vol. 6 (Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 2002), 48–49, plates 25 and 26.
65. Dunhuang wenwu yanjiusuo ed., *Dunhuang Mogao shiku*, vol. 4 in *Zhongguo shiku*, plate 28, cave no. 148, the southern wall, "The *Maitreya Sutra* Presentation."
66. Li Yumin, "Dunhuang chu Tang de Mile jing bian" 敦煌初唐的彌勒經變, in Dunhuang shiku yanjiuyuan, ed., *2000 nian Dunhuangxue guoji xueshu taolunhui wenji* 2000 年敦煌學國際學術討論會文集 (Lanzhou: Gansu minzu, 2003), 71.
67. Juqu Jingsheng 沮渠京聲, trans., *Foshuo guan Mile pusa shangsheng doushuaitian jing* 佛說觀彌勒菩薩上生兜率天經, *T.*14 (452) 418–20.
68. Li Yumin 李玉珉, "Dunhuang chu Tang de Mile jing bian" 敦煌初唐的

彌勒經變, *Fojiao yanjiu zhongxin xuebao* 佛教研究中心學報 5 (2000): 207.

69. Zhao Shengliang, "Chengdu Nanchao fudiao Mile jingbian yu Fahua jing bian kaolun," 34–35.
70. Howard, "Stele with Sumeru (recto) and Maitreya Paradise (verso)," in Watt, *China, Dawn of a Golden Age*, *200–750 A.D.*, 223, plate 126.
71. Ku, "Wu Zetian yu Duoheluo de Milefowang xinyang."
72. Ibid. See also Ku, *Cong tianwang chuantong dao fowang chuantong*, ch. 5, 240–56. In this chapter, I mention that the *Zhengming jing* had been regarded as a false text since the Sui. But according to my recent study of the tradition, the text could have been transmitted from India or translated into Chinese much earlier. See also Ku, "Cong 'Daci rulai gaoshu' shuoqi," 21.
73. Ku, "Wu Zetian yu Duoheluo de Milefowang xinyang."
74. Amoghavajra, trans., *Vajrasekhara-ekāksara-buddhoshnisha-cakravartin-dhyāya-kalpa*, *T.*19 (957) 326b28–c1. It reads: "To be seated like the previous one with two legs completely crossed up [i.e., in the posture of meditation] or to be seated like a *cakravartin*, with two legs crossed at the ankle or one leg pendent, or even with one leg straight. [These are] the three seated postures of a *cakravartin*" (坐如前全跏或作輪王坐交腳或垂一乃至獨膝豎輪王三種坐). The text was also translated into Japanese by Yūsei Abe 安倍ゆうせい, in *Kokuyakku Issaikyō* 國譯一切經, *Mikkyōbu* 密教部, vol. 5, but the translation consists only the *kārikās*.
75. *Puxian pusa shuo zhengming jing* reads, "When I descend [to be incarnated], I will descend in the *cakrī stūpa* from Tuṣita Heaven" (吾下之時, 或兜率天上雀梨浮圖). See *T.*85 (2879) 1367b4–5.
76. *T.*85 (2879) 1367a21ff. The text reads: "Then the heavenly king from the realm of *rūpa* offers the precious crown, jewels and lotus-like garment to the Buddha. At that time, the heavenly king of *arūpa* offers the subtle *bodhi* flower, jewels and all kinds of fragment scents . . . to the Buddha."
77. Howard, "Stele with twin seated Buddhas," in Watt, *China, Dawn of a Golden Age, 200–750 A.D.*, p. 226, plate127 (recto).
78. Howard, "Maitreya altarpiece," in Watt, *China, Dawn of a Golden Age, 200–750 A.D.*, 266, plate 168 (rector).
79. Shi Daoshi 釋道世, *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林, *T.*53 (2122) 407c2–18.
80. Su Bai, "Nanchao kanxiang yiji chutan," 184.
81. The "Biography of Shi Sengmin" in *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* reads: "(Seng) Min made an image of Buddha Maitreya and various objects of worship for his daily worship" (旻嘗造彌勒佛並諸供具朝夕禮謁). See *T.*50 (2060) 463b14–15.
82. Omura Seigai 大村西崖, *Shina bijutsushi chōso hen* 支那美術史雕塑篇 (Tokyo: Kokusho kankọkai, 1980, rpt.), 163.
83. Ibid., 164.

84. Betty Gosling, *Origins of Thai Art* (Trumbull: Weatherhill, 2004), 72.
85. Bhikṣuṇi Huiding's inscription in cave no. 17 at Yungang Grottoes (雲岡十七窟明窗惠定尼造像記) reads, "In the thirteenth year of the Taihe reign of the Great Dai (大代) . . . Bhikṣuṇi Huiding became ill and vows to commission the making of three images: Śakyamuni, Prabhūtaratna, and Maitreya, hoping that her illness will be cured, and her life will be peaceful." See Mizuno Seiichi 水野清一 and Nagahiro Toshio 長廣敏雄, *Unkọ sekkutsu* 雲岡石窟 (Kyoto: Kyoto Daigaku Jimbunkaku kenkyūsho, 1953), Vol. XII, Text, 46; see also Ku, "Cong 'Daci rulai gaoshu' shuoqi."

10

Social and Cultural Dimensions of Reclusion in Early Medieval China

Alan Berkowitz

The idea of reclusion ostensibly concerns hiding, but in early medieval China recluses seem to be everywhere visible. Some are courted by the court. Some are offered material support by local patrons. Some teach and write at home, some in institutions. Some are visited in the hills, some in town. Some even are perched in the gardens of the rich and famous. Some practice occult arts in public, sometimes in the company of the highest officials. Some are spiritual masters and codifiers of religion, some residing in monasteries or other institutions supported by the state. Some are renowned for literary and artistic achievements. Some are derided as insincere gainseekers. Some are cited in discussions about the rightfulness or wrongfulness of reclusion itself, some in polemics about social and political utility, or as exemplary models of an individualistic ideal, or as focus of literary fabrication or debate. And, counterintuitively, many so-called or self-proclaimed recluses and high-minded men in truth were high state officials whose reclusion to all intents and purposes was reclusion in the abstract. This chapter will explore the ubiquity of reclusion in early medieval China, especially in terms of the interplay of the practice and portrayal of reclusion with the social and cultural character of the times.[1]

To begin with, the early medieval period usually has been characterized in terms of political instability, as a time of despair and mortal danger for many of the scholar-official class, an unfortunate transitioning between the high cultural unities of the Han (206 BCE–220 CE) and Tang (618–907), founded and lost through incursion, nefariousness, ineptitude, and affliction. I will not question the record of particular events, part of which I will detail below through the end of

the Eastern Jin (317–420) as prelude and backdrop to discussion. But I do hope that readers will join me in recognizing that the period often has been judged too injudiciously, discounted in good part due to its very complexities. I also hope that readers will join me in emending historical hindsight to look at the so-called transitional period of the Southern and Northern Dynasties instead as one of spectacular distinction and endurance when viewed in terms of its influence on the cultural matrix of imperial China, especially in the areas of thought and religion, literature and art, science and music, conscious articulation of a new-found appreciation of the natural world and the individual, and the inexorable insinuation of reclusion into the life and mind of individual and society in traditional China.

Following close upon the six years of fratricidal civil wars at the start of the fourth century known historically as the "disturbances of the Eight Princes,"[2] widespread insurgencies pressed heavily the Western Jin rulers and its people.[3] In 311 the emperor was captured in Luoyang 洛陽 by the ethnically non-Chinese Xiongnu 匈奴, and at his execution two years later another imperial prince, Sima Ye 司馬鄴, known posthumously as Emperor Min 愍, was proclaimed emperor in Chang'an 長安 at age fourteen. Sima Ye had the southern city of Jianye 建鄴 renamed Jiankang 建康 following the practice of tabooing the emperor's personal name; Jiankang would be the political capital and cultural center of the southern dynasties during the period known as the Southern and Northern Dynasties, and largely has been seen in the preponderance of Chinese historical and literary materials as the social and cultural bull's-eye of the entire early medieval period.

At the end of 316 the northern contenders captured both the new emperor and the city of Chang'an, and the Western Jin (265–316) was finished. According to Charles Holcombe, "between 80 and 90 percent of the Western Jin officials either died or fled into exile at this time"; it has been estimated that during the several subsequent years more than a million people, mostly members of the imperial family, military commanders and officials, as well as the prominent families and their extended households, fled from their homes in the north across the wide Yangtze river, to newly created émigré districts in and around Jiankang.[4] One example of these is the district set up near the Jianchu 建初 temple in the autumn of 320 for the one thousand households who had come from the commandery of Langye 琅邪 in Shandong, the former residence of the first emperor of the Eastern Jin.[5]

In 317 the Jin royal prince Sima Rui 司馬睿, who had taken Jianye (i.e., Jiankang) as his base of power in 307, received the title of King

of Jin, and in the third month of the following year he declared himself emperor (posthumous title Emperor Yuan 元, r. 317–322) upon hearing news of the death of Emperor Min.[6] Thus began the Eastern Jin, founded upon the destruction of their imperial and social base in the northern plains by an adversarial "foreign" military, and the emigration of the populace to an unfamiliar and largely "foreign" physical and cultural environment in the rich southlands. Jiankang would serve as the capital of five successive "southern" dynasties over the next 270 years; all of these dynasties were renowned for their internecine struggles. Meanwhile, the north China capitals of Chang'an, Louyang, and others, passed through some twenty-two different "northern" dynasties between the Jin and the Sui (581–617), of which only seven were ruled by self-identified ethnic Chinese. Only during the Northern Wei (386–534) was there a relative respite from the nearly continuous changes in territorial rule.

The Eastern Jin turned out to be relatively stable and prosperous after all: it was the longest lived of the southern dynasties, it may have had the largest population in the world, it was highly cosmopolitan, and it was economically flourishing.[7] But it was not without regular vicissitudes and convulsions caused by rebellions, incursions by military satraps, and large-scale religious insurgencies. In 322 Wang Dun 王敦 (266–324), a cousin of the Eastern Jin's principal decision maker Wang Dao 王導 (276–339), sent his army downriver from Wuchang 武昌 in revolt, briefly taking control of Jiankang. After Emperor Yuan died late that same year and his son and successor soon also died in 325, his grandson, known posthumously as Emperor Cheng 成 (r. 325–343), took the throne at age five. (Another of his grandsons, posthumously titled Emperor Mu 穆, would become emperor in 344 at just age two.) The following year the emperor's regents finally moved the imperial residence into the palace complex and gardens, but it was largely destroyed in 328 during the disastrous revolt of another general, Su Jun 蘇峻 (d. 328): during the seven months of Su Jun's occupation of the capital, he is said to have depleted the treasury stores of two hundred thousand bolts of cloth and several tens of thousands of bolts of silk, five thousand *jin* 斤 (over 1,000 kg) of gold and silver, and hundreds of millions in cash. After Su Jun was killed, his kinsman Su Yi 蘇逸 and his son Su Shuo 蘇碩 burned down whatever palace halls remained, and there was such a famine in Jiankang that one *dou* 斗 of rice (about two liters) cost ten thousand in cash.[8]

Following the destruction of the imperial residence, many urged moving the capital to Yuzhang 豫章 or Kuaiji 會稽, but in the end the

palace was reconstructed on the ruins of the former palace between 330 and 332. The imperial enclosure itself was about four km. in circumference, with an outer wall of about ten km.; construction was funded by a levy of two thousand cash charged each official when selected for office.[9] The palace was completely refurbished in 378, with the labor of six thousand men and the expense of grain that had been stored up over a seven-year period.[10] These expenses all were in addition to the costs of continuing military expeditions undertaken to regain the northern territories and the ancient capitals, and the expenses of defending incursions from the troops of rulers and strongmen from the west and the north, at least until the defeat in 383 of the eight hundred thousand–man force under the lead of Fu Jian 苻堅 (338–385), emperor of the non–ethnically Chinese dynasty known as the Former Qin 前秦 (350–395), at the landmark Battle at Fei River.[11]

The Jin rule soon was threatened by the strain, as well as by intrigue and factional domination at court, and imperial control over the realm progressively weakened. In 399 another religious rebellion took over a large area in Kuaiji, led by the charismatic leader Sun En 孫恩 (d. 402). In 403 the military satrap Huan Xuan 桓玄 (369–404) deposed the emperor and established a new, short-lived dynasty, but was defeated by Liu Yu 劉裕 (356–422), an even more powerful military commander. Liu Yu rescued Jiankang again in 410, quelling a renewed attack by the religious rebels under the lead of Sun En's brother-in-law Lu Xun 盧循 (d. 411); Liu Yu briefly retook Luoyang and Chang'an on a northern campaign, and soon enough took full control over the government in Jiankang. After having the Jin emperor murdered in early 419 and taking the title King of Song 宋, he finally deposed the new emperor he had recently installed, and founded his own new dynasty, the Song, in 420, ending the Eastern Jin's century of rule in Jiankang. These were interesting times indeed, and not only for the Eastern Jin: fifteen rulers of the Southern Dynasties courts were murdered, and some eighty-seven of the rulers of the various states during the Southern and Northern Dynasties died from unnatural causes, almost always assassination.[12]

There was obvious reason to fear that involvement in political affairs might be risky, and one account of the period says explicitly, "Throughout the realm there were many dire affairs, and few were the men of renown who remained unscathed."[13] Similarly, in the early decades of the Northern Wei, we are told that "severity and gravity were overwhelming, and in the ranks of the palace bureaus, many received [capital] punishment for the meagerest oversight. Virtually none did not flee into seclusion to escape the tumult before their

eyes."[14] Contemporary examples of high-profile talented men who met with an untimely end were all too evident and too numerous,[15] and in a widely known snippet of cynicism, Xie Wan 謝萬 (ca. 321–361) once highlighted the dangers of serving against remaining intact in reclusion in his "Discussion of Eight Worthies" ("Baxian lun" 八賢論).[16]

But I am not convinced that dangerous times alone can account for the growing numbers of men in hiding, the growing prominence of men in reclusion, and the growing integration of conventions of reclusion into the cultural mainstream. Instead, I will suggest below that other factors were at the heart of it. In any case, remaining hidden was never a sure way to preserve one's life. One example concerns Liu Yin 劉殷 (d. 307?), who was known for his filial piety and who had refused appointments even through the sanguinary usurpation of Sima Lun 司馬倫 (d. 301). Shortly thereafter, he accepted office under the regent Sima Jiong 冏 (d. 302). When Jiong asked why, Liu Yin responded,

> The Founding Ancestor [of the Jin] responded to the times with his great sagacity, and the former kings assisted the age with their consummate virtue. . . . Thus I, Yin, had hoped that a single man distancing himself from the thousand-chariot state would be a plan not to be overturned. Fortunately I came upon an [enlightened] age like that of Tang [Yao] and Yu [Shun], and for that reason had no need to fear the executioner's axe. Now milord with his divine might and astute bearing has expelled the tyrant and restored the proper government. Nevertheless, his sage deeds are rather crude, stern and awesome, and increasingly grave. Were I, Yin, to repeat as before, then I fear it would invite the punishment [of execution] meted out to Huashi. Thus I did not dare not to come.

> 世祖以大聖應期, 先王以至德輔世。… 故殷希以一夫而距千乘, 為不可迴圖, 幸遨唐虞之世, 是以不懼斧鉞之戮耳。今殿下以神武睿姿, 除殘反政, 然聖迹稍粗, 嚴威滋肅, 殷若復爾, 恐招華士之誅, 故不敢不至也。[17]

Another example concerns Zhou Hongrang 周弘讓 (ca. 498–ca. 561), who found service not to his liking and retired to Mao shan 茅山, refusing further offers. But he later served the truculent usurper Hou Jing 侯景 (d. 552) as Vice-Director of the Secretariat. When asked why, he responded, "In the past, the Way of the ruler was just and true, and one could advance or retreat according to established custom. Now heaven and earth [literally, Qian and Kun] have changed places, and were one not to come forward, one would meet with harm. It simply is that I feared death."[18]

Perilous times indeed might influence a man's behavior. But bodily peril notwithstanding, reclusion was not simply an occasional, contingent expedient, and even the famous Guo Tai 郭泰 (128–169) of the Later Han, who willfully declined all appointments to public office while nonetheless keeping close associations with the highest echelon of officials, was disparaged by Ge Hong 葛洪 (ca. 280–ca. 340) as one who merely desired to avoid a troubled age. Ge Hong wrote: "This man is but one who sought to avoid disorder; he is not an example of the loftiness of absolute reclusion."[19]

The eminent Guan Ning 管寧 (158–241) also avoided disorder, yet the portrayal of the man and his conduct clearly shows him as a practitioner of reclusion. Along with his high-minded compatriots Wang Lie 王烈 (141–218)[20] and Bing Yuan 邴原 (fl. 185), Guan Ning sailed to Liaodong 遼東 in the far northeast during the mid to late 180s to avoid the turmoil in the central states occasioned by the rebellions of the Yellow Turbans and Dong Zhuo 董卓 (d. 192). There, Guan Ning went to live on a hillside north of the commandery town, where he quickly gained a large émigré following. According to Fu Xuan's 傅玄 (217–278) account of Guan Ning, "[A]ll those who had crossed the sea to avoid the plight came to seek him out, and they too took up residence; in the space of a month it had turned into a city."[21] Guan Ning remained in Liaodong for thirty-seven years before returning home, "when the central states had achieved a modicum of peace." But still resolved to a life of disengagement, he declined numerous honors and appointments upon his return.[22] While one might always seek to escape strife by avoiding particular situations and particular places, and might even follow this tack as a life strategy,[23] by measure of contemporary judgment bona fide reclusion was never simply hiding out.

For most civilizations reclusion usually involves withdrawal from the world into a life of seclusion, most often in a religious context, with renunciation commonly implying ascetic self-denial. But reclusion in China is typically portrayed as secular, concerned with politics, ethics, and psychology. The normative basis of reclusion most often is textually expressed as the enactment of a principled stance in opposition to the customary path to success and personal fulfillment through official, public service. Basically, as I hope to have shown elsewhere, the empirical delineation of reclusion in most sources comes down to whether or not one served in office.[24]

Known variously as Hidden Men (*yinshi* 隱士), Disengaged Persons (*yimin* 逸民), High-minded Men (*gaoshi* 高士), Scholars-at-Home (*chushi* 處士), or even Men of the Mountains and Forests (*shanlin zhi*

shi 山林之士),[25] men in reclusion commonly are described in terms of mindset, motivating factors, and lifestyle. Although the range is broad, reclusion most often has unfortunately been stereotyped retrospectively as being Confucian or Daoist in nature. Conventionally it is said that the Confucian withdrew as an ethical reaction against the political or moral order of the times, thereby compromising his personal commitment to public service; the Daoist withdrew out of his disdain for worldly involvement, thereby fulfilling his ambition. But this hackneyed dichotomy is verisimilar only in terms of the patterning of the image of reclusion in early China and the formulation of abstract prescriptions for withdrawal.

Similarly, as reclusion usually has been viewed through the filter of attitudes toward state and society, it is largely characterized as: (1) fundamentally political in nature, or (2) an indication of lofty idealism and incorruptible character, or (3) an expression of eccentric nonconformism. Again, this may more or less fit descriptions of reclusion found in the classics and the intellectual and political discourse of the great thinkers of old. But when sources permit us to look at the lives and circumstances of real people, something that for all practical purposes only begins to be possible in the early medieval period, the life paths of a goodly number of individuals challenge not only the simplistic Confucian/Daoist dichotomy, but also the patent dichotomy between social integration and individualistic pursuit. Further, as the practice and portrayal of reclusion became a more integrated facet of the early medieval Chinese cultural world, many of the values, rationales, and ways of life germane to the practice of reclusion sometimes appear in rather diverse and disparate contexts.

Donald Holzman, among others, recently underscored his view that beginning in the early centuries of the Common Era the Chinese underwent "tremendous changes in the attitudes towards the world and towards themselves," in large measure signaling the "gradual evolution of China from an 'Antiquity' to a 'Middle Age.'"[26] The "tremendous changes" included a new mindfulness to one's own individual way of engaging with the world, and unprecedented self-conscious attention was paid to conduct and endeavor. A new *mentalité* was emerging, and ancillary to the unremitting tensions in the political realm, this period also saw revolutionary vicissitudes in the intellectual and religious realms.[27] I believe that it was under these compelling circumstances that reclusion took on its enduring character in traditional Chinese culture. That is to say that many of the social and cultural aspects of reclusion that subsequently seemed so self-apparent really are concomitant to and

are encapsulated in the change in mindset that is everywhere evident in the early medieval period.

In early medieval China the allure of reclusion was palpable, not only for individuals who habitually eschewed official positions out of singular or individualistic pursuits, but also pretty much throughout the scholar-official class. And whereas in earlier times withdrawal most often was accompanied by detachment from the social and cultural spaces typically the bailiwick of men in official position, during the early medieval period, as an increasing number of well-bred individuals disengaged from public service, they nevertheless did not necessarily sacrifice engagement within the social and cultural milieux of their times.

Motivation for reclusion might draw on classical precedent for service or withdrawal, or it might stem from an individual's personal proclivity. Surely, some simply viewed the times as too awry to serve what they perceived as an ill-fated court. Yet others pointedly opted out of the traditional path to accomplishment in favor of private life and pursuits close to their heart. Still others resolved to remain detached from the dusty world, driven by religious devotion or the pursuit of perfection through esoteric practice.[28]

There are many examples of men who were dedicated to scholarship and teaching in the classical tradition, publicly recognized for their erudition and frequently recommended for positions at court that they steadfastly refused. They might be private teachers having either a few disciples or great numbers of followers, or they might even be affiliated with institutions of learning endorsed by the state or by a locality.[29] Examples of some of the more renowned disengaged scholars are Huangfu Mi 皇甫謐 (215–282), Fan Xuan 范宣 (fl. ca. 376–396), Zhou Xuzhi 周續之 (358–423), Lei Cizong 雷次宗 (386–448), Zang Rongxu 臧榮緒 (415–488), and Ruan Xiaoxu 阮孝緒 (479–536). Zang Rongxu was the compiler of one of the most influential versions of the *Jin shu*. Ruan Xiaoxu was the author of the famous bibliographical treatise *Qi lu* 七錄; he also wrote the most philosophically probing treatise on reclusion in the entire early medieval period.[30]

And there were many eminent individuals of independent means and prominent families whose vocation was, simply, genteel retirement. While not accepting public office, they led a socially active life nonetheless, maintaining close relations and interacting freely with the official elite. They were epitomes of the image of the "retired gentleman," and many of these individuals were prestigious men of the arts. Examples are Xu Xun 許詢 (fl. ca. 358), Dai Kui 戴逵 (ca. 326–396) and his son Yong 顒 (378–441), He Dian 何點 (437–504), and Zhang Xiaoxiu 張孝秀 (481–522).

Others rejected public service in favor of a life devoted to religion, renouncing worldly pursuit and sometimes practicing their faith in a monastic, anchoritic, or ascetic mode. Their motivation and life-path was religious conviction, as is quite obvious even with the secular overlay of historiographical hindsight. Many had religious institutions (*si* 寺 or *guan* 觀) erected in their honor, or were lay supporters who donated their residences or estates to the church. Some Buddhist men in reclusion were well-known lay practitioners, such as Xie Fu 謝敷 (fl. mid to late fourth century) and Ming Sengshao 明僧紹 (fl. mid to late fifth century),[31] while others were ordained priests, such as Bo Daoyou 帛道猷 (d. ca. 400 at age seventy-one), Zhi Dun 支遁 (314–366), Bao Zhi 寶志 (ca. 418–514), and Hui Yuan 慧遠 (334–416).[32] Hui Yuan, we remember, was at the heart of the local Amitābha cult (usually called the Lotus Society, *lianshe* 蓮社) whose founding members included also the eminent men in reclusion Zong Bing 宗炳 (375–443), Zhou Xuzhi, and Lei Cizong.

Others followed the beliefs and observances of Daoist traditions, such as Deng Yu 鄧郁 (d. 515), Chu Boyu 褚伯玉 (394–479), Gu Huan 顧歡 (390–453), and the first real systematizer of a Daoist canon, Lu Xiujing 陸修靜 (406–477).[33] Michel Strickmann once called some of the famous Daoist practitioners of reclusion "ornamental hermits,"[34] for they were not by any means hidden, and many were instrumental in the propagation of Daoism, especially in the transmission of sacred texts and the codification of doctrine.[35]

Further, a number of prominent families had a tradition of reclusion for generations; examples include the Zhai 翟, Zong 宗, Gong 龔, and Guo 郭 families. There were iconic fishermen and woodcutters, too, of course, as well as a number of cave-dwelling ascetics, itinerant practitioners of arcane arts, and venerable adepts of the esoteric and the occult, some of whom kept to a low, hidden, profile, some of whom did not shirk notoriety or renown. And there are a few early examples of what would soon become the quintessential topos of reclusion: quiet and content self-sufficiency in peaceful rural surroundings, in the company of books, *qin* 琴 (zither), writing brush, and wine. Whatever the real-life circumstances of Tao Qian 陶潛 (365–427), his writings have solidified this idyllic vision of life in reclusion as a ubiquitous cultural constant.[36]

The transfer of the Jin court to Jiankang disrupted the dynastic enterprise and ushered in a period of political volatility. But alongside potential danger, the times also provided a real opportunity for exercising one's personal aspiration and inspiration. Administrative and military officials, especially, were essential players in the bureaucratic reconfiguring

of the interrupted Jin dynasty in its new locus south of the river. And for persons aspiring to engagement in the métier of officialdom, these exciting times might be exhilarating and challenging, as well as a propitious moment for advancement at court. It was likewise opportune for those who chose disengagement from the court to one degree or another, and for those who wished to pursue private endeavors and a life "in reclusion." Jiankang was the center of the Eastern Jin's rule, but due at least in part to the longstanding manorial economic and social structure of the southlands, culture was rich also away from the capital, especially in the hills and gardens of Yangzhou 揚州, Wu 吳, and Kuaiji. Throughout the Six Dynasties, rather than life at court in Jiankang, a significant number of individuals found life in these outlying locales congenial. Some took satisfaction in postings away from the capital, and some enjoyed moments of transition at their country estates, while some forewent officialdom entirely. Further, religious institutions and colonies were founded and prospered distant from the din of the cities.[37]

In tracing the birth and development of landscape poetry, Donald Holzman marks a late–Eastern Han and post-Han reorientation in personal sensitivities that brought unprecedented appreciation of the natural world.[38] This perhaps is the seed for the growth of homilies to the private life, such as Zhang Heng's 張衡 (78–139) "Returning to the Fields" ("Gui tian fu" 歸田賦) and its many later successors, and the equally innovative, influential, and representational poetic trope of heading to the mountains to "Beckon the Recluse" ("Zhao yin shi" 招隱詩).[39] These writings evince a mindset that savors the life of the individual who has chosen disengagement from official service at court in favor of retirement to enticing surroundings of rural farmlands or uncultivated wilderness, and denigrates the life of the official in the capital and its attendant perquisites, obligations, and entanglements. These are evocative literary expositions that have retained their status as epitomes of excellence even until today largely on account of their expression of disposition and lifestyle. To a piece, however, they are not at all expositions of life in reclusion, but rather are idealized or rationalized expressions of an occasion in the life of the scholar-official, whether that be a juncture out of office, retirement after a career of service, a short retreat, or, more often, an evening's musing and some skillful composition on a theme. Above all, they are witnesses to the insinuation of aspects of reclusion into the minds and hearts of the scholar-officials, and the blurring of borders between practicing reclusion as a way of life and adopting a variety of its attributes in an occasional or affective mode.

Certainly, the mountains and forests no longer were viewed as necessarily hostile and unfitting, as they had been in the "Beckoning the Recluse" poem of the *Chuci* 楚辭 and generally so in pre-Han writings, but rather as places one might explore for reasons of discovery, liberation, or quietude.[40] In addition, a number of mountain locales were particularly renowned for their excellent landscape and salutary environs, especially in the areas around Kuaiji and Wu. Apart from scholar-officials such as Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 (385–433) and many others who owned hereditary estates and wilderness tracts in the mountains, the learned scholar and Buddhist priest Zhi Dun, who will be discussed below, once infamously purchased land on Wozhou 沃洲 mountain near one of the many temples in Shan 剡 (Sheng *xian* 嵊縣, Zhejiang) because of its beauty.[41] Hui Yuan also was enamored by his mountain residence on Lu shan 廬山, and after settling there never left again.[42] While for potential scholar-officials mountains once had separated the realm of engagement from that of disengagement, in early medieval China roaming the wilderness was not the sole purview of hermits, recluses, and cave-dwelling ascetics. Conversely, reclusion did not necessarily mean withdrawal from the world of men into the hidden wilds, for reclusion had become part of the social and cultural matrix.

The popular taste for the hills led the founding emperor of the Qi dynasty (Gaodi 高帝, Xiao Daocheng 蕭道成, r. 479–483) to muse, "What was there to be found in the mountains?" It was just this question that the emperor directed Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456–536) to respond to around 482, some ten years before Tao himself forsook office and took up permanent residence in the mountains about a day's ride from the capital. Tao's response was a laconic poem averring that there one might find white clouds over the ridges, tangible sources of intangible mountain pleasures, which can only be experienced on one's own.[43] In the Six Dynasties, it would seem, mountains and the natural landscape might be conducive to personal fulfillment across a broad spectrum.[44]

In the mid-fourth century, the noted scholar-official and man of the arts Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (303–361) exuberantly traipsed through the mountains looking for fun, release, and herbs in the company of such prestigious men as the cool, soon-to-be-eminent statesman Xie An 謝安 (320–385) and his brother the powerful military officer and literatus Xie Wan, the renowned practitioner of reclusion Xu Xun, the Buddhist pundit Zhi Dun, and the Daoist thaumaturge Xu Mai 許邁 (300–348).[45] Wang Xizhi had held high official positions, but on April 7, 355 (at fifty-three *sui*, i.e., age fifty-two) he vowed before the grave of his parents that from

that day on he would retire, or in his words, "stop when it sufficed" (*zhizu* 止足).[46] For Wang Xizhi this was highly agreeable; times had changed, and withdrawal no longer need be accompanied by privation. As Wang recounted in a letter to his friend Xie Wan,

> In the past, some who left the world behind let down their hair and feigned madness, while others profaned themselves and their doings; I would call this onerous. Now I gain my leisure without effort, and follow my longstanding wishes; this is something in which I rejoice. Could it possibly be other than a gift of heaven? It would be inauspicious to counter heaven!
> 古之辭世者或被髮陽狂, 或污身穢跡, 可謂艱矣。今僕坐而獲逸, 遂其宿心, 其為慶幸, 豈非天賜? 違天不祥![47]

Not long after, the scholar-official and poet Xie Lingyun earned his eternal niche in mountaineer lore for his use of footwear specially designed with removable platforms (literally, "teeth") front and rear to facilitate either ascent or decent of mountains. The same is true for Xie in literary history, with greater aplomb, for his unparalleled "Rhapsody on Dwelling in the Mountains" ("Shanju fu" 山居賦).[48] For Xie Lingyun also, the mountains represented pleasurable relief from officialdom, and he took to making outings following his appointment in 422 as Governor of Yongjia 永嘉 (modern Wenzhou, Zhejiang). As related in Xie's biography,

> The commandery had mountains and waters of great renown, of which Lingyun had always been fond. As his appointment as Governor did not meet with his aspiration, he gave full sway to making excursions, passing throughout the various *xian*.
> 郡有名山水, 靈運素所愛好, 出守既不得志, 遂肆意游遨, 徧歷諸縣。[49]

Perhaps based on these outings, Xie Lingyun chronicled local landscape in a work titled "Record of Excursions to Famous Mountains" (*You mingshan zhi* 遊名山志). While only fragments remain of this work, its revealing preface contains the following:[50]

> Clothing and food are what human life requires, while mountains and waters are what one's natural disposition gravitates toward. Those of today, mired in the entanglements which accompany their needs, simply inhibit their natural inclinations.
> 夫衣食人生之所資。山水性分之所適。今滯所資之累, 擁其所適之性耳。[51]

Xie Lingyun implies that one ordinarily fulfills one's physical needs in places and situations that are not necessarily beneficent, and certainly is referring to government postings. And in Xie Lingyun's parlance, which voices a sentiment commonly found in Six Dynasties writings, one's natural leanings are toward intimate communion with the natural world, the world of mountains and waters beyond the constraints of the world of men.[52] Attainment of this goal, he tells us, is preconditioned by the actualization of one's natural inclination toward disencumbering oneself from the affairs of the temporal world. Xie also allows that men of great talent emerge to succor the world in times of need on account of their temperament and ability; but in doing so they curb their propensity toward life in the open spaces, locales to be valued more highly than metropolitan stages of politics and material gain. The examples Xie uses avow that when the world has achieved pacific equilibrium (or at least when it no longer requires one's overt participation), one then can freely devote oneself to one's more natural inclinations. Irrespective of Xie Lingyun's own personal vicissitudes, the concepts expressed in his short preface, reminiscent of those expressed by Wang Xizhi, evince literati associations of mountains with the salutary release from worldly encumbrances and perturbations, and likewise evince a benign image of the natural world.

While many of the Six Dynasties landed aristocracy rejoiced in mountain outings, the wilderness was conventionally the wonted purlieu of some office-eschewing practitioners of reclusion, known through centuries of writings as "men of the mountain and forests." Men in reclusion, also almost invariably highly educated members of the scholar-official class whose common bailiwick was an office in a government bureau, headed for the hills (literally or euphemistically) for the express purpose of forsaking the constraints of participation in officialdom. Officials on holiday shared with them the outward aspects of appreciation of the natural world, but the real difference between them was as great as between practitioners of reclusion and ordinary woodcutters, who as common inhabitants of the mountains but eked out their unschooled and undistinguished livelihood laboring in the hills. Woodcutters and men in reclusion may have shared environs, but as Xie Lingyun reminds us,

> Woodcutters and "hiders" may both be in the mountains,
> But all along their business has been different.
> 樵隱俱在山, 由來事不同。[53]

A century and a half earlier the practitioner of reclusion Hu Zhao 胡昭 (162–250)[54] eschewed various appointments, dwelling in the mountains farming and pursuing scholarship for pleasure. He reportedly once said, and this is possibly the source of Xie Lingyun's lines, "Men in reclusion are found in the mountains; woodcutters also are found in the mountains. Being in the mountains may be the same, but the reason why they are in the mountains is different."[55] This would be apt also for officials and practitioners of reclusion.

Wang Xizhi headed for the hills upon his voluntary retirement, and passed his days in peace. Xie Lingyun, it is remembered, allegedly took to making excursions into the mountains because his appointment(s) did not meet with his aspiration. He may have extolled the mountains with heartfelt enthusiasm, but, contrary to his own advice, he never extricated himself from the political travails of his time. Instead of finding peace, personal cultivation, and self-sufficiency in the wilderness, Xie Lingyun ultimately met with an untimely execution in the marketplace of what is now Guangzhou in the furthest southeast reaches of the Chinese world. His last poem, written on the eve of his execution, ends:

> I only regret my gentlemanly resolve
> Has not found surcease upon the mountains.
> 恨我君子志，不獲巖上泯。[56]

It would be facetious to group Wang Xizhi and Xie Lingyun among practitioners of reclusion, of course, but the examples are instructive in terms of gauging the ubiquity of conventions of reclusion in early medieval thought and society. A number of famous anecdotes further evince the extent to which reclusion was engrained in the society already by the mid-fourth century, and the liberal material recognition and support some might receive for their lofty attitudes. For example:

> Every time Xi Chao [336–378] heard of someone desiring to live in lofty retirement, he would always put up a subsidy for him of a million cash, and in addition would build a residence for him. While he was living in the Shan Mountains [Zhejiang] he once constructed a house for Dai Kui which was extremely refined and genteel. . . .
> 郗超每聞欲高尚隱退者, 輒為辦百萬資, 并為造立居宇。在剡為戴公起宅, 甚精整 …。[57]

Dai Kui was a preeminent artist, sculptor, *qin* player, and arguably the most renowned practitioner of reclusion of his day.[58] Once, when the

moon obscured the astral analogue to the terrestrial man in reclusion, because of Dai Kui's notoriety everyone feared that this must be the cosmic sign of his death. As it turned out, it was not Dai Kui who had died but Xie Fu, a respected Buddhist polemicist and fellow practitioner of reclusion.[59] Another anecdote concerns Xu Xun, also a highly visible man in reclusion, who was notable in his day for his influential philosophical (*xuanyan* 玄言) poems and his mountain roamings in the company of Wang Xizhi and other leading officials. It is said that, "While Xu Xun was living in retirement in a secluded cave . . . gifts from noblemen from all around would keep coming in."[60]

Dai Kui and Xu Xun were socially prominent practitioners of reclusion, "sponsored," so to speak, by men of status and wealth. Probably the best known sponsorship of reclusion was the Liang emperor Wu's (Wudi 武帝, r. 502–549) support of Tao Hongjing, the extraordinary polymath, adept of both the practical and occult arts, and prodigious man of religion, known especially for his role in systematizing Daoist texts. Tao retired from government service in 492 at thirty-five years of age to great pomp and ceremony, and soon was provided unprecedented imperial support for his pursuits out of office at Mao shan. Tao referred to himself as "Dweller-in-Retirement at Huayang" (華陽隱居), but he was commonly given the appellation "Grand Councilor Mid the Mountains" (山中宰相).[61]

While there had been a relationship between the court and men in reclusion from the outset, it becomes almost a commonplace during the early medieval period. Prominent men in reclusion had significant interactions with the highest echelon of the court circle, including, among many others, the classical scholar Ruan Xiaoxu, the Daoist Lu Xiujing, and the Buddhist Hui Yuan. The eccentric Buddhist thaumaturge Bao Zhi was granted free access to the inner quarters of Liang Wudi's palace.[62] The Daoist adept Deng Yu competed with Tao Hongjing to prepare an elixir for the same emperor; Deng Yu apparently finished first, but the emperor dared not ingest it.[63] Even Guo Wen 郭文, wise recluse, mountain man and vegetarian farmer, adept of the occult, distinguished in the Buddhist faith and literally a god in the Daoist pantheon, descended from his wilderness retreat on the invitation of Wang Dao, advisor to the emperor and arguably the most powerful man of the day, to publicly perch in the private park at Wang's residence in the capital, where Guo carried on his ascetic and reclusive life unperturbed for seven years.[64]

The support of reclusion might be a measure of the magnanimity of a ruler, but the satrap Huan Xuan 桓玄 (369–404) saw this as a

calculated pretension of the legitimacy and security of his rule during his short usurpation in 404:

> Due to the fact that each successive dynasty had had its gentlemen who took flight, yet his own age alone was without any, Xuan summoned the sixth-generation descendant of Huangfu Mi, Huangfu Xizhi, to serve as Editorial Director and in addition gave him gifts and provisions, ordering him, however, to decline each time and not accept. He then gave him the appellation High-minded Gentleman, but people of the time gave him the name "Bogus Recluse."
> 玄以歷代咸有肥遁之士, 而己世獨無, 乃徵皇甫謐六世孫希之為著作, 幷給其資用皆, 令讓而不受, 號曰高士, 時人名為充隱。[65]

Historical precedent for the imperial sanctioning of high-profile public retirement was found in the official accounts of Han Fu 韓福 of the first century BCE Renowned for his conduct and fealty, refinement and purity, Han Fu was summoned in 80 BCE to appear at the court. The emperor (Han Zhaodi 漢昭帝) conferred upon him gifts and honors, as well as the yearly material support normally accorded to emeritus senior officials, returning him home to serve as a moral example to his district.[66] The Han Fu precedent in some ways fostered what one scholar has termed "exemplary eremitism," which was, on the part of individuals, emulation of the high moral conduct of men in reclusion and, on the part of the court, incorporation of the recognition of such conduct directly into the imperial recommendation system.[67] Reclusion, then, might be a resource, as well as a recourse.

As public recognition of reclusion became the norm, an astonishing number of accounts of the lives of early medieval personalities begin with a formulaic recounting of their lofty attitudes and singular conduct. But the vast majority of these accounts then go on to relate the official careers of these men. The problem of insincerity had already led to a popular sentiment that "scholars-at-home (*chushi* 處士) were purely thieves with unwarranted reputation,"[68] but during the early medieval period, disengagement as a marketable pose became a recurrent topic of discussion, soon encapsulated into the set expression, "The Zhongnan Mountains are but a shortcut to officialdom" (終南仕宦捷徑).[69]

Still, many argued that reclusion itself actually was beneficial to local governance and to society as a whole. Huangfu Mi, renowned as a scholar, medical theorist, and practitioner of reclusion (and compiler of the *Lives of High-minded Men*, *Gaoshi zhuan* 高士傳), believed that even while men in reclusion did not serve the state directly, still they

had service-oriented utility, such as quelling avarice and subduing vulgar practices.[70] In the late 480s, Shen Yue 沈約 (441–513), an authority on the subject of reclusion who nevertheless spent virtually all of his adult life holding the most prestigious and influential positions at court, wrote a discriminating essay concerning what he called "the worthy man in reclusion," in which he went so far as to term men in reclusion "proximate sages" (*ya sheng* 亞聖).[71] And he wrote elsewhere, urging a seemingly high-minded man to accept high office, that

> [t]he will [manifest by men in reclusion] within the mountain forests is something the emperor properly promulgates. . . . Their dutifulness is on a par with those whose careers are in governance.
> 山林之志, 上所宜弘。… 義等為政。[72]

But Shen Yue's point, characteristic of officeholders in general, is that if one is worthy in reclusion, one would be so also at court. Indeed, there were many memorials advocating that worthy men be allowed to freely transition between reclusion and office, office and reclusion.

Some scholar-officials were proponents of what has been termed "reclusion within the court" (*chao yin* 朝隱), an idea that perhaps began with the facetious jesting of Dongfang Shuo 東方朔 (154–93 BCE),[73] but gained great currency during the Jin and later. In the third century, Wang Kangju 王康琚 joked poetically that

> Lesser Hiders hide in the hills and marshes,
> Greater Hiders hide in the court and marketplace.
> 小隱隱陵藪, 大隱隱朝市。[74]

When Deng Can's 鄧粲 (fl ca. 377) friends in reclusion denounced him for letting down his resolve and accepting an appointment, he answered: "As for what constitutes the Way of reclusion, one can also be in reclusion in the court, and likewise one can be in reclusion in the marketplace. Reclusion is found first of all in oneself, and not in external things."[75]

The vogue of reclusion in the abstract is illustrated in an anecdote about a visit by the late-fifth-century imperial prince Xiao Jun 蕭鈞 (473–494), King of Hengyang 衡陽, to the personal garden of Kong Zhigui 孔稚珪, a high court officer but self-professed retired gentleman. Kong asked the young king, "You, my eminence, lodge at the Vermillion Gates and roam the [imperial] Purple Corridors; how is it that you have dealings with me, a man of the mountains?" Xiao Jun quipped,

"My body lodges at the Vermillion Gates, yet my emotions roam the rivers and seas; my body enters the Purple Corridors, yet my mind is in the distant clouds" (身處朱門，而情遊江海；形入紫闥，而意在青雲).[76] Xiao's reply was as disingenuous as Kong's question, but true transcendence of mundane norms was expressed already several centuries earlier by the Buddhist monk Zhu Qian 竺潛 (286–374), who once retorted to a query as to why he, a Man of the Way, would visit with royalty: "You, milord, naturally but behold the Vermillion Gates; this poor monk sees them as thatched doors."[77]

In objecting to Xie Wan's portrayal of reclusion as being superior to service, Sun Chuo 孫綽 (314–371) expressed the view that "[f]or those who embody the Mystery and understand the Remote, public life or retirement amount to the same thing" (體玄識遠者，出處同歸).[78] Sun Chuo had a highly syncretic vision of the Way,[79] and sought equanimity in his inner life and his public engagement, even while passing through a number of prestigious posts, including Governor of Kuaiji and Minister of Justice. Still, Emperor Ming 明 of Song (r. 465–472) unfavorably compared the noetic reclusion of Sun Chuo with the actual reclusion of Xu Xun: "Xun to the end never let down his resolve, while Chuo entangled himself in service to the age" (詢卒不降志，而綽嬰綸世務焉).[80]

Sun Chuo's teacher was the scholar-monk Zhi Dun.[81] Zhi Dun was ordained as a priest at age twenty-five and never took up office; but he was never disengaged from the goings-on of his day. He divided his time between temples in the capital and his own retreat in the hills of Shan commandery in Kuaiji, engaging in "pure conversation" (*qingtan* 清談) and public expositions of philosophical and religious texts in the camaraderie of eminent men of similar bent.[82] He was an intimate associate of the foremost representatives of the "Kuaiji clique," the group of literati comrades that included Wang Xizhi, Xie An and Xie Wan, Xu Xun, and Sun Chuo.[83] Zhi Dun shared in literary pleasures and mountain outings with this group,[84] and was present at the famous Lanting 蘭亭 gathering celebrating the rites of purification in drink and poetry on April 22, 353.[85] To a man, those of the Kuaiji clique voiced disengagement, but only Zhi Dun and Xu Xun practiced reclusion throughout their lives.

Zhi Dun also propagated the teachings of the *Vimalakīrti sūtra* (*Weimojie jing* 維摩詰經),[86] which featured the activities and dialogues of Vimalakīrti, a bodhisattva whose beneficent presence in the world was manifest as a wealthy Buddhist lay householder (*jushi* 居士), a "retired gentleman" who supported the Buddhist community. The

scholarly Chinese gentry found the sutra strongly appealing because the bodhisattva did not need to renounce his own worldly stature, even while endeavoring to transform the world. The precepts of the *Vimalakīrti sūtra* provided further encouragement to the pragmatic transcendence that obfuscated the separation between living in reclusion and holding office.[87]

Analogous to the developments in philosophy and religion that are reflected in the "tremendous changes in the attitudes towards the world and towards themselves"[88] that transformed the society and culture of early medieval China, it is no surprise that literary writings of this time also reflect an enhanced view of reclusion. Reclusion might be used for didactic utility or personal plaint, although there also is found a considerable amount of thematic composition or idyllic description. Reclusion appears as the focus of apologies, criticisms, eulogies, idealizations, and, especially, hypothetical dialogues about the ideal of reclusion, as well as some purely poetical homilies about life distant from the hubbub of the capital.[89]

Two things are readily apparent in these writings: they were highly conventionalized, often adapting the same set of traditional images and allusions, and virtually all of them were written by persons who did *not* practice reclusion.[90] What is important here is that reclusion had become a mainstream topic for literary composition, and it was so for artistic depiction as well.[91] Indeed, there was a very sizeable audience for the topic of reclusion, and compilations such as Huangfu Mi's *Lives of High-minded Men* apparently were the vogue in early medieval China, there being at least thirty-two works of similar content completed by the mid sixth century, some of them complete with illustrated portraits and commentary.

As I hope is clear from the above, reclusion was particularly pervasive in the social, political, intellectual, religious, and literary panorama of the early medieval period. As an integrated component of the culture of the time, it no longer was delimited by abstract pronouncements found in classical writings, but was a living reality palpable to both those who practiced reclusion as a way of life and those who did not. In addition to righteous and incorruptible withdrawn worthies, and lofty and detached free-spirited recluses, men in reclusion might also pursue a broad variety of vocations, avocations, and lifestyles, and most significantly many of these men now leave their own tangible traces of their mindset, endeavors, and influence. There are artists, musicians, classicists, poets, bibliophiles, teachers, philosophers, theologians, practitioners and theoreticians of medicine and pharmacology, priests, recluses, religious men and ascetics,

gentlemen farmers, and even political consultants. Further, and this is a measure of the integration of reclusion into the cultural mainstream, many of the conventions and traits commonly associated with reclusion were prized within scholar-official circles and incorporated into social custom and individual conduct: one did not have to practice reclusion to appreciate it and to dabble in it. Political volatility during the early medieval period may have lessened the attractiveness of official service for some and may perhaps have also heightened the wish to hide, but it does not account for the growing allure within the ethos and culture of the educated elite of many of reclusion's outward aspects and inner attitudes, whether as a life-path or as something that could be summoned up on an occasional basis, or even as an aesthetic modality. Rather, the integration of reclusion into the cultural consciousness was one aspect of the sweeping changes within Chinese civilization that characterized the early medieval period; and its impact on the formulation of traditional Chinese culture has endured to present times.

Notes

1. One of the trajectories of my book on reclusion—*Patterns of Disengagement: The Practice and Portrayal of Reclusion in Early Medieval China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000)—was to problematize the topic of reclusion in China in order to clarify the issues. That done, in this chapter I would like to endeavor to relocate the phenomenon of reclusion in early medieval China within the broader cultural realm.
2. See Anthony Bruce Fairbank, "Kingdom and Province in the Western Chin: Regional Power and the Eight Kings Insurrection (A.D. 300–306)," unpublished MA Thesis, University of Washington, 1986.
3. On the fall of the Western Jin and the subsequent century of the Eastern Jin, see Zhuang Huiming 莊輝明, *Dong Jin shu* 東晉書 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1997), and Xu Song 許嵩 (fl. 756), comp., *Jiankang shilu* 建康實錄 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1986), 5.121–11.389. See also Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019–1086), comp., *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1982). For a handy list of some of the highlights, see Feng Junshi 馮君實, ed., *Zhongguo lishi dashi nianbiao* 中國歷史大事年表 (Shenyang: Liaoning renmin, 1984).
4. See Charles Holcombe, *In the Shadow of the Han* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 27, and Fang Xuanling 房玄齡 (578–648) et al., comps., *Jin shu* 晉書, 26.791. References to the standard dynastic histories are to the modern Zhonghua shuju editions.
5. *Jiankang shilu* 5.134.
6. See *Jin shu* 6.149 and Holcombe, *In the Shadow of the Han*, 141, n. 1.

7. See the broad-based cultural study by Zhang Keli 張可禮, *Dong Jin wenyi zonghe yanjiu* 東晉文藝綜合研究 (Ji'nan: Shangdong daxue, 2001), and see Holcombe, *In the Shadow of the Han*, 70–71. See also Shufen Liu 劉淑芬, "Jiankang and the Commercial Empire of the Southern Dynasties," in *Culture and Power in the Reconstitution of the Chinese Realm*, ed. Scott Pearce, Audrey Spiro, and Patricia Ebrey (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001), 35–52.
8. Sources say that Sun Yi was either Jun's son or his younger brother. On the rebellion see *Jin shu* 7.172–74, 100.2627–28, and *Jiankang shilu* 7.173–76.
9. See *Jiankang shilu* 7.181–82 and Guo Li'an 郭黎安, "Shilun Liuchao shiqi de Jianye" 試論六朝時期的建鄴, in Zhongguo gudu xuehui 中國古都學會, eds., *Zhongguo gudu yanjiu* 中國古都研究 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin, 1985), 277–80.
10. See *Jiankang shilu* 9.265-66; Zhang Xuan 張鉉 (fourteenth c.), ed., *Yuan Zhizheng Jinling xinzhi* 元至正金陵新志 (Ming exemplar copy of 1344 ed., Nanjing University library), 12; and Zhu Xie 朱偰, *Jinling guji tukao* 金陵古蹟圖考 (Shanghai: Shangwu, 1936), 4.112.
11. On this famous and pivotal battle, see Michael C. Rogers, *The Chronicle of Fu Chien: A Case of Exemplar History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968).
12. My count is tabulated from information in Bo Yang 柏楊, comp., *Zhongguo diwang huanghou qinwang gongzhu shixi lu* 中國帝王皇后親王公主世系錄, 2 vols. (reprinted, Beijing: Zhongguo youyi, 1986).
13. See *Jin shu* 49.1360. The remark itself described the juncture of the Wei and Western Jin, but would seem equally appropriate for the entire early medieval period as well.
14. See Wei Shou 魏收 (505–572) et al., comp., *Wei shu* 魏書, 34.807.
15. One infamous period of seventy-five years saw the executions of, among many other eminent men, He Yan 何晏 in 249, Ji Kang 嵇康 and Lü An 呂安 in 262, Zhang Hua 張華, Jia Mi 賈密, Shi Chong 石崇, and Pan Yue 潘岳 in 300, Lu Ji 陸機 and his brother Yun 雲 in 303, and Guo Pu 郭璞 in 324.
16. See Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403–444), comp., *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語, 4.91 and 4.91, commentary, quoting the [*Jin*] *Zhongxing shu* 晉中興書; see Yang Yong 楊勇, ed., *Shishuo xinyu jiaojian* 世說新語校牋 (Taipei: Zhengwen, 1976). Remnants of Xie's piece are in Xu Jian 徐堅 (659–729), ed., *Chuxue ji* 初學記 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1985), 17.411, 412. Xie's essay concerned four pairs of service-versus-reclusion foils: Qu Yuan 屈原 and the Fisherman 漁父, Jia Yi 賈誼 and the diviner Sima Jizhu 司馬季主, Gong Sheng 龔勝 and the Old Man from Chu 楚老, Ji Kang and Sun Deng 孫登. The first of each pair met an untimely demise, it is remembered, and presumably it was so because they did not heed the advice of their disengaged counterpart.

17. See *Jin shu* 88.2289. In antiquity, the disengaged recluse Huashi 華士 was executed by the high imperial minister Lü Shang 呂尚 for his noncompliance.
18. See Li Yanshou 李延壽 (fl. 625), comp., *Nan shi* 南史, 34.901.
19. See Ge Hong 葛洪, comp., *Baopuzi* 抱朴子, *Waipian* 外篇 (*Sibu beiyao* 四部備要 ed.), 46.3b. Ge Hong's harsh assessment of Guo Tai was not shared by Guo's many admirers over the centuries who saw in Guo the exemplary qualities of a practitioner of reclusion.
20. Wang Lie died in Jian'an 23 at seventy-eight *sui* according to an anonymous *Xianxian xingzhuang* 先賢行狀 quoted in Chen Shou 陳壽 (23–97), comp., *Sanguo zhi* 三國志 11.355, commentary; on the dating of the *Xianxian xingzhuang*, see Lu Bi 盧弼, ed., *Sanguo zhi jijie* 三國志集解 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1982), 1.69b. According to Fan Ye 范曄 (398–446), comp., *Hou Han shu* 後漢書, 81.2697, Wang died during the twenty-fourth year of the Jian'an reign, which would make his dates 142–219.
21. See Fu Xuan's *Fuzi* 傅子, quoted in *Sanguo zhi* 11. 354, comm. Bing Yuan also drew a following while in Liaodong: within a year several hundreds of families flocked to him for his teachings; see *Sanguo zhi* 11.350.
22. See *Sanguo zhi* 11.354–60.
23. Confucius is said to have opined: "The Worthy might shun the entire world. The next best will shun a particular place, the next in turn a particular look, and the next again particular words." See *Lunyu* 論語 14.39.
24. See my *Patterns of Disengagement*. See also my articles on this clear delineation: "Topos and Entelechy in the Ethos of Reclusion in China," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (*JAOS*) 114, no. 4 (1994): 632–38, and "Reclusion and 'The Chinese Eremitic Tradition,'" *JAOS* 113, no. 4 (1993): 575–84.
25. On the terminology, see the "Preface" to my *Patterns of Disengagement*. See also Aat Vervoorn, *Men of the Cliffs and Caves* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1990), 5–8.
26. See Donald Holzman's collected essays, *Chinese Literature in Transition from Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (Aldershot, UK, and Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1998), "Preface," vii.
27. There are two still nonpareil Western language introductions to relevant developments in the intellectual climate of early medieval China: Richard B. Mather's "The Controversy Over Conformity and Naturalness During the Six Dynasties," *History of Religions* 9, no. 2–3 (1969–70): 160–80; and Étienne Balàzs, "Entre Révolte nihiliste et évasion mystique: les courants intellectuels en Chine au IIIè siècle de notre ère," *Études Asiatiques* 2 (1948): 27–55. Balàzs's study has been translated by H. M. Wright, "Nihilistic Revolt or Mystical Escapism," in *Chinese Civilization and Bureaucracy*, ed. Arthur F. Wright (New Haven: Yale University

Press, 1964), 226–54. See also Charles Holcombe, *In the Shadow of the Han*; Yü Ying-shih 余英時, "Ming jiao sixiang yu Wei Jin shifeng de yanbian" 名教思想與魏晉士風的演變, reprinted in his *Shi yu Zhongguo wenhua* 士與中國文化 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin, 1987), 401–40; Fan Ning 范寧, "Lun Wei Jin shidai zhishifenzi de sixiang fenhua ji qi shehui genyuan" 論魏晉時代知識分子的思想分化及其社會根源, *Lishi yanjiu* 歷史研究1955.4: 113-31; and Li Fengmao 李豐楙, "Wei Jin Nanbeichao wenshi yu daojiao zhi guanxi" 魏晉南北朝文士與道教之關係 (PhD dissertation, Guoli Zhengzhi daxue, 1978). See also Sun Shuqi's 孙述圻 *Liuchao sixiang shi* 六朝思想史 (Nanjing: Nanjing chubanshe, 1992) for a thorough, broad-based introduction to the thought of the period.

28. Information about the individuals mentioned in the following several paragraphs mostly is readily found in the various chapters on reclusion or elsewhere in the dynastic histories, and in *Gaoseng zhuan* (see n. 41, below), *Shishuo xinyu*, *Jiankang shilu*, etc.; see also the few particular references in the notes that follow.
29. See the important and excellent study by Valérie Lavoix, "À l'école des collines: l'enseignment des lettrés reclus sous les dynasties du sud," in *Éducation et instruction en Chine, III, Aux marges de l'orthodoxie*, ed. Christine Nguyen Tri and Catherine Despeux, Bibliothèque de l'INALCO, No. 6 (Paris-Louvain: Éditions Peeters, 2004), 43–65.
30. See my "Hidden Spoor: Ruan Xiaoxu and his Treatise on Reclusion," *JAOS* 111, no. 4 (1991): 704–11.
31. On Ming Sengshao, see my "Biography of a Buddhist Layman," in *Religions of China in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 397–404.
32. On Bao Zhi see my "Account of the Buddhist Thaumaturge Baozhi," in *Buddhism in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 578–85.
33. On Lu Xiujing, see Stephen Bokenkamp, "Lu Xiujing, Buddhism, and the First Daoist Canon," in Scott Pearce et al., *Culture and Power*, 181–99.
34. See his "The Mao Shan Revelations: Taoism and the Aristocracy," *T'oung Pao* 63, no. 1 (1977): 31–40.
35. The overlap in written hagiographical traditions is readily notable between practitioners of reclusion and practitioners of religion (and/or various arcane or esoteric traditions). On the latter, see the various discerning studies by Robert Ford Campany, including *To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth: A Translation and Study of Ge Hong's Traditions of Divine Transcendents* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002) and *Strange Writing: Anomaly Accounts in Early Medieval China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996). I treat the problematic nature of categorical distinctions in biographical writings in two unpublished papers: "Category and Cliché in Medieval Biographical Traditions,' and "Biography and the Rhetoric of Culture in Early Medieval China."

36. See my *Patterns of Disengagement*, 215–26; and see the excellent studies of Xiaofei Tian, *Tao Yuanming and Manuscript Culture: The Record of a Dusty Table* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), and Wendy Swartz, "Rewriting a Recluse: The Early Biographers' Construction of Tao Yuanming,' *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles and Reviews* (*CLEAR*) 26 (2004): 77–97.
37. See Chen Zuolin 陳作霖, comp., *Nanchao Fosi zhi* 南朝佛寺志, in his *Jinling suozhi wuzhong* 金陵瑣志五種 (Nanjing: Yeli shanfang, 1900), and Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1959). Cf. J. D. Frodsham, *The Murmuring Stream*—(Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1967), vol. 1, 44–45, 100–101. See also Xie Lingyun's "Rhapsody on Dwelling in the Mountains" (*Shanju fu* 山居賦) and his autocommentary in Shen Yue 沈約 (441–513), comp., *Song shu* 宋書, 67.1764.
38. See his "Landscape Appreciation in Ancient and Early Medieval China," 1–163, reprinted in his *Chinese Literature in Transition*.
39. Zhang Heng's composition is translated in David R. Knechtges, *Wen xuan, or Selections of Refined Literature*, vol. 3 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 139–43. For a study with translations of the "Beckoning the Recluse' poems, see my "Courting Disengagement: 'Beckoning the Recluse' Poems of the Western Jin,' in *Studies in Early Medieval Chinese Literature and Cultural History*, ed. Paul W. Kroll and David R. Knechtges (Provo, UT: T'ang Studies Society, 2003), 81–115. Rather than expressions of personal sentiment and volition, these latter poems, I show, are best seen in the context of literati-official camaraderie and courtly poetry, as embellished compositions that capitalize on intertextuality and the mutual interplay of tropes and imagery.
40. Qian Mu 錢穆 has compiled information on the terminology of mountain living; see his "Zhongguo gudai shanju kao" 中國古代山居考, *Xin Ya shuyuan xueshu niankan* 新亞書院學術年刊 5 (1963): 423–65.
41. See Gao Sisun 高似孫 (ca. 1160–1220), comp., *Shan lu* 剡錄 (Sheng *xian*: Zhejiang sheng Sheng xian xianzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, 1985), 60; Hui Jiao 慧皎 (497–554), comp., *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1997), 4.157; *Shishuo xinyu* 25.28; and Richard B. Mather, *Shih-shuo hsin-yü: A New Account of Tales of the World* (2nd ed., Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies, 2002), 445.
42. See *Gaoseng zhuan* 6.221; cf. Tansen Sen and Victor Mair, "The Tale of Master Yuan of Mount Lu,' in *Hawai'i Reader in Traditional Chinese Culture*, ed. Victor Mair et al. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 305–306.
43. For the emperor's question and Tao's response, see Li Fang 李昉 (925–996) et al., comps., *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1981), 202.1525.
44. See Donald Holzman, "Landscape Appreciation in Ancient and Early

Medieval China"; Richard B. Mather, "The Landscape Buddhism of the Fifth-Century Poet Hsieh Ling-yün," *Journal of Asian Studies* 18, no. 1 (1958): 67–79; Wang Guoying 王國瓔, *Zhongguo shanshui shi yanjiu* 中國山水詩研究 (Taipei: Lianjing, 1986); J. D. Frodsham, "The Origins of Chinese Nature Poetry," *Asia Major* 8 (1960): 68–103; and Wang Yi 王毅, *Yuanlin yu Zhongguo wenhua* 園林與中國文化 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin, 1990).

45. See *Jin shu* 79.2072, 80.2099, 80.2101. These men, perhaps excepting Xu Mai, were the foremost representatives of what Ishikawa Tadahisa 石川忠久 has termed the "Kuaiji clique"; see his "Sha An to Kaikei no yū" 謝安と會稽の游, *Tōkyō Shina gakuhō* 東京支那學報 6 (1960): 33–52.
46. *Jin shu* 80.2101. On Wang's dates I have followed the suggestions of the Sheng *xian* 嵊縣 local historians—Wang's life and death, and also his grave are close matters within their purview; see Liu Qiao 六橋, "Wang Xizhi shengzu nian bian" 王羲之生卒年辨, *Sheng xian wenwu* 嵊縣文物 6 (1983): 1–2. Guo Lianfu 郭廉夫 also argues for 303–361 in his recent study; see Guo's *Wang Xizhi pingzhuan* 王羲之評傳 (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue, 1996), 188–92. According to Morino Shigeo 森野繁夫, Wang's dates would be 307–365, and thus forty-nine *sui* when he retired from office; see Morino's *Ō Gishi den* 王羲之伝 (Tokyo: Hakuteisha, 1991), 87, 173.
47. *Jin shu* 80.2102.
48. See *Song shu* 67.1775, 1754–72. See also Francis A. Westbrook, "Landscape Description in the Lyric Poetry and 'Fuh on Dwelling in the Mountains' of Shieh Ling-yunn' (PhD Dissertation, Yale University, 1973) and "Landscape Transformation in the Poetry of Hsieh Ling-yün,' *JAOS* 100, no. 3 (1980): 237–54; the forthcoming translation and study by David Knechtges; and J. D. Frodsham, *The Murmuring Stream*, vol. 1, 42ff.
49. See *Song shu* 67.1753 and Frodsham, *The Murmuring Stream*, vol. 1, 37.
50. The text is found in Yan Kejun 嚴可均 (1762–1843), comp., *Quan Shanggu Sandai Qin Han Sanguo Liuchao wen* 全上古三代秦漢三國六朝文 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1985), *Quan Song wen* 全宋文 33.1a, from *Chuxue ji* 5.94. In the remnants of the work collected by Yan Kejun, the locales chronicled all are in modern Zhejiang, several in the close vicinity of Yongjia.
51. See my translation of Xie's "Preface' in *Hawai'i Reader in Traditional Chinese Culture*, ed. Victor H. Mair et al., 260–61. Several lines of the preface of Xie's "Record' have been translated to this point by Richard B. Mather in his sensitive article, "The Landscape Buddhism of the Fifth-Century Poet Hsieh Ling-yün," 74.
52. See also Xie's "Rhapsody on Dwelling in the Mountains," *Song shu* 67.1756, autocommentary.

53. See Xie's *Tiannan shuyuan jiliu zhiyuan* 田南樹園激流植援 in Xiao Tong 蕭統 (501–531), comp., *Wen xuan* 文選 (Taipei: Zhengzhong, 1971), 30.7a.
54. Hu's dates would be 161–249 according to Huangfu Mi's 皇甫謐 (215–282) *Gaoshi zhuan* 高士傳 (*Sibu beiyao* edition), C.11a.
55. See the *Jin shu* 晉書 of Zang Rongshu 臧榮緒 (415–488) quoted in Li Shan's 李善 (d. 689) commentary to Xie's poem (*Wen xuan* 30.7a). The Chinese text reads: "隱者在山, 樵者亦在山。在山則同, 所以在山則異。"
56. See *Song shu* 67.1777 for this version of the poem's ending, translated by Mather, "Landscape Buddhism," 73; cf. also Frodsham, *The Murmuring Stream*, vol. 1, 78–79.
57. *Shishuo xinyu* 18.15; the translation is that of Richard B. Mather, *Shih-shuo hsin-yü*, 361, changing only the romanization; the clan name Xi also is read as Chi. On Xi Chao's proclivity toward supporting reclusion, see also *Jin shu* 67.1804–05 (trans. Mather, ibid, again changing the romanization): "Xi was by nature fond of hearing about people who lived in retirement. If any of them was able to decline the comforts of life and shake out his clothes (in farewell to the world), he would build a house for him and make vessels and clothing, and provide servants and boys, and lay out one hundred pieces of gold, sparing no expense."
58. He is the one whom Wang Huizhi 王徽之 famously set out to visit on an impulse, but turned back when the impulse was spent. See *Shishuo xinyu* 23.47 and my "Courting Disengagement," 81–84, 115.
59. See Wu Shijian 吳士鑑 and Liu Chenggan 劉承幹, comps., *Jin shu jiaozhu* 晉書斠注 (Taipei: Yiwen, n.d.), 94.42b–43a for full references.
60. *Shishuo xinyu* 18.13, trans., Mather, *A New Account*, 361, changing only the romanization.
61. On Tao Hongjing, see my *Patterns of Disengagement*, 209–15, and my "*Record of Occultists,*" in *Religions of China in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez Jr., 461–65.
62. See my "Account of the Buddhist Thaumaturge Baozhi," in *Buddhism in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez Jr., 578–85.
63. See my "Biography and the Rhetoric of Culture in Early Medieval China."
64. On Guo Wen, see my *Patterns of Disengagement*, 238–41.
65. *Jin shu* 99.2593–94. The anecdote is repeated in *Jiankang shilu* 10.322, where it says that Huan Xuan "secretly ordered him to decline and not accept."
66. See Ban Gu 班固 (32–92), comp., *Han shu* 漢書 7.225, 72.3083; *Gaoshi zhuan* B.9b; and my *Patterns of Disengagement*, 82–83.
67. On "exemplary eremitism," see Vervoorn, *Men of the Cliffs and Caves*, esp. 116–25, 175–85.
68. See *Hou Han shu* 61.2032.
69. See Liu Su 劉肅 (fl. 807), comp., *Da Tang xinyu* 大唐新語 (Beijing:

Zhonghua, 1984), 10.157–58 and Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007–1072) et al., comps., *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書 123.4375.

70. See his "Preface" to the *Gaoshi zhuan*, his various writings in *Jin shu* 51.1410–16, and my *Patterns of Disengagement*, 156–60.
71. See the preface to his "Accounts of Reclusion and Disengagement" ("Yinyi zhuan" 隱逸傳) in *Song shu* 93.2276, translated and discussed in *Patterns of Disengagement*, 178–84.
72. "Directive to Xie Fei on Behalf of Emperor Wu" ("Wei Wudi yu Xie Fei chi" 為武帝與謝朏勑) in Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢 (557–641), comp., *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1982), 37.664.
73. See Vervoorn's chapter on "Eremitism at Court," in *Men of the Cliffs and Caves*, 204–27. Cf. my "Reclusion and 'The Chinese Eremitic Tradition,'" 583–84, and "Topos and Entelechy in the Ethos of Reclusion in China."
74. "Fan zhaoyin shi" 反招隱詩, *Wen xuan* 22.4b.
75. *Jin shu* 82.2151.
76. See *Nan shi* 41.1038. The Vermillion Gates and the Purple Corridors are metonymy for the palace.
77. See *Gaoseng zhuan* 4.156–57; cf. *Shishuo xinyu* 2.48 for a slightly different version of this anecdote.
78. *Shishuo xinyu* 4.91, commentary, quoting the [*Jin*] *Zhongxing shu* 晉中興書, trans., Mather, *A New Account*, 147. See also Hellmut Wilhelm, "A Note on Sun Ch'o and his 'Yü-tao-lun,'" *Sino-Indian Studies* 5, no. 3–4 (1957): 269. Sun's response was to Xie's "Baxian lun"; the full text of Sun's objection has been lost.
79. Sun's view was that "Confucius of the Zhou is none other than the Buddha; the Buddha is none other than Confucius of Zhou. It is simply a case of giving a name in terms of outer [overt traces] and inner [substance]. See his "Yu dao lun" 喻道論 in Sengyou 僧祐 (435–518), comp., *Hong ming ji* 弘明集 (*Sibu beiyao* edition), 3.10a.
80. See *Shishuo xinyu* 9.61, commentary, quoting Emperor Ming's *Wenzhang zhi* 文章志.
81. Zhi Dun is credited as being the founder of the "Matter-as-Such" (*ji se* 即色) school of Buddhism, on which see Tang Yongtong 湯用彤, *Han Wei liang Jin Nanbeichao Fojiao shi* 漢魏兩晉南北朝佛教史 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1983), 180–86, and Walter Liebenthal, *The Book of Chao* (Beijing: Fu Jen Catholic University, 1948), 152–57. On Zhi Dun, see *Gaoseng zhuan* 4.159–64 and Charles Holcombe, *In the Shadow of the Han*, 112–24. See also Chen Yinke 陳寅恪, "Xiaoyao you Xiang-Guo yi ji Zhi Dun yi tanyuan" 逍遙遊向郭義及支遁義探源, reprinted in *Jinmingguan conggao er bian* 金明館叢稿二編 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1982), 83–9; Liu Guijie 劉貴傑, *Zhi Daolin sixiang zhi yanjiu* 支道林思想之研究 (Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu, 1982), 68–72; Hachiya Kunio 蜂屋邦夫, "Sōshi Shiyōyōyō hen o meguru Kaku Shō to Shi Ton no kaishaku, awasete Shi Ton no Bukkyō rikai ni tsuite" 莊子逍遙遊篇をめぐる郭象と支遁の解釈併せて支遁の佛教理解について, *Hikaku bunka kenkyū* 比較

文化研究 8 (1968): 59–98; Fukunaga Mitsuji 福永光司, "Shi Ton to sono shui: Tō Shin no Rō Sō shisō" 支遁とその周圍: 東晉の老莊思想, *Bukkyō shigaku* 仏教史學 5.2 (1956): 12–34; E. Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, 116–30; and Leon Hurvitz, "Chih Tun's Notions of *Prajna*," *JAOS* 88, no. 2 (1968): 243–61.

82. See the several anecdotes in *Shishuo xinyu* 4 and *Gaoseng zhuan* 4.159–64. See also Holcombe, *In the Shadow of the Han*, 113–24.
83. See Ishikawa Tadahisa, "Sha An to Kaikei no yū."
84. See *Jin shu* 79.2072, 80.2099, 80.2101.
85. This outing was immortalized by Wang Xizhi's "Preface" to the collected poems the participants composed at the gathering (fifteen of the men drank forfeits instead of composing poems); see *Jin shu* 80.2099 and Wang's *Linhe xu* 臨河敘 quoted in the commentary of *Shishuo xinyu* 16.3. For references to the "Preface" and its various textual traditions and translations, see David R. Knechtges, *Wen xuan*, vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 513–14, nn. 261–62.
86. See *Shishuo xinyu* 4.40, commentary, quoting the fourth century *Gaoyi shamen zhuan* 高逸沙門傳 of Zhu Faji 竺法濟.
87. See Richard B. Mather, "Vimalakirti and Gentry Buddhism," *History of Religions* 8, no. 1 (1968): 60–73, and Paul Demiéville, "Vimalakirti en Chine," reprinted in *Choix d'études bouddhiques* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), 347–64.
88. This is how Holzman characterized developments in the period; see the discussion above, and n. 26 above.
89. A number of representative examples can conveniently be found in *Yiwen leiju, juan* 36–37. In addition to the very many other similar works having miscellaneous titles, literary compositions entitled "Recluses" (i.e., disengaged persons, *yimin* 逸民) or "Remote Ones" (*youren* 幽人) were written by Lu Ji, Lu Yun, Yu Ai 庾敳 (262–311), Zao Ju 棗據 (d. ca. 311), Wang Yi 王廙 (early fourth century), Jiang You 江逌 (mid fourth century), Ge Hong, and Xie Lingyun.
90. The literary portrayal of reclusion in the abstract during the Six Dynasties is the subject of a separate work still in progress.
91. Portraits often were commissioned of famous practitioners of reclusion, as witnessed by the titles of works by early medieval painters recorded in the *Lidai minghua ji* 歷代名畫記 (compiled by Zhang Yanyuan 張彥遠 in the Tang dynasty), as well as in the plethora of illustrated versions of works such as the *Gaoshi zhuan*, etc.

11

Destiny and Retribution in Early Medieval China

Yuet-Keung Lo

As the Later Han dynasty was unraveling in the late second century, many people began to sense not only its imminent downfall, but the final demise of human history itself. These uncanny observers came from a wide social spectrum that included government officials, Confucian thinkers, and religious Daoist proselytizers. They each proposed their counteractive strategies to redress the looming dynastic debacle, ranging from pragmatic measures of statecraft to religious millennialism. While dissimilar in source, doctrine, and effect, such curative strategies were all apparently characterized by one strong if subtle strain of fatalism.

Notably, the Buddhists in late Han China made reference to an impending dissolution of the world. It was no coincidence that Buddhist missionaries were able to command considerable respect among the Chinese populace at this time as the Buddhist doctrine of karma offered another form of determinism that, unlike hard core fatalism, was amenable to personal intervention. Effective personal efforts mean a possibility to change for the better. *Xuanxue* 玄學 (Study of the Mysterious) was also interested in the issue of change. To *xuanxue* philosophers such as Wang Bi 王弼 (226–249) and Guo Xiang 郭象 (d. 312), change must be considered in light of constraints and necessity. Such natural limits are articulated in the reconceptualized term *ming* 命, often translated as destiny or fate. This paper traces the spectacular rise of the concept of destiny in late Han times and its manifold expressions in early medieval China. Specifically, it examines the religious and philosophic meanings of various strategic responses, which as it turned out, were more successful in appealing to spiritual aspirations and philosophic interests than in forestalling the collapse of the Han Empire.

Destiny and Retribution in Late Han Religious Daoism

The idea of universal kingship had been a sacred notion in Chinese history since the Shang dynasty. It stipulates, in its mature formulation, that the world (or "all under heaven," *tianxia* 天下) should be universally governed by a king entrusted with the mandate of heaven (*tianming* 天命). The evidence of Shang oracle bone inscriptions attests to the idea of the supreme deity, *Di* 帝, supervising the world of mortals, which was governed by the Shang kings.[1] Such relationship of supervision between *Di* and the Shang king implies the sanction of the latter's authority by the former's august approval. In accounting for the persistence in China of the idea of universal kingship, Benjamin Schwartz aptly observes that "in China, during the Zhou period, something like the concept of an impersonal order, a *dao*, had already emerged; this was a cosmic-social order within which the kingship occupied a well-established, permanent, and pivotal focus."[2]

The idea of universal kingship was further strengthened by Dong Zhongshu's 董仲舒 (179–104 BCE) teleological Confucianism which incorporated the idea of "five phases" from the Yin-Yang School into the yin-yang system of Confucianism of the Warring States period.[3] According to Dong, Dao originates from heaven. If heaven does not change, Dao will also remain the same.[4] When Dao reigns, the "son of heaven" on whom heaven's mandate is bestowed wins the favor of heaven. Thus, his government will prosper. Since Dao is a cosmic-social order upon which all under heaven rely, when Emperor Wu 武 of Han espoused Dong's philosophy as the principles by which he would run his government, the Confucian state became virtually an instrument for practicing universal kingship.[5]

The emperor in his cosmic role was the guardian of Dao and in his human role he was the benevolent king of a universal government. Through universal kingship, which linked the cosmic order to the social order, divine authority sanctioned the existence of society and its moral order. Hence, when the Confucian state in the late Han period eventually crumbled with its emperor's resignation of his cosmic role, and the communication between heaven and man was ruptured, so was the divine legitimacy of the emperor's vicegerency in a universal government. For example, in 164 CE, on an imperial visit to Tunmeng (in modern Hubei) Emperor Huan 桓 of Han was challenged with respect to the basis for his legitimacy as universal king.[6] And Zhang Jue 張角, who practiced the Way of Huang-Lao 黃老道 and organized the Yellow Turban Rebellion in the 180s, even went so far as to formally

declare the death of heaven and the need to replace the Han Empire.[7] This political challenge naturally became particularly devastating to people who lived with a belief in universal kingship. The debacle of the Han Empire, at least to some of its denizens, was identical to the end of the world. Pessimism seemed to prevail in every social stratum. When he was urged to join the government and became an official, Guo Tai 郭太 declined by saying that "I have observed the signs in heaven at night and examined human affairs during the day; what heaven is going to abandon cannot be supported" (吾夜觀乾象，晝察人事，天之所廢，不可支也).[8] In fact, even "people who did not have average intelligence realized that the Han Empire was going to collapse" (自中智以下，靡不審其崩離),[9] as the author of the *History of the Later Han Dynasty* (*Hou Han shu* 後漢書) Fan Ye 范曄 (398–445) was later to observe.

The bankruptcy of universal kingship undermined the harrowed authority of the imperial Confucian orthodoxy and thus created an atmosphere favorable for the rise of a religious Daoist millenarian movement as propagated in the *Taiping jing* 太平經(Scripture of Universal Peace, TPJ).[10] In the TPJ the message of the Celestial Master that the world is approaching its end was more explicitly stressed, perhaps to lend more persuasive force to its religious propaganda. Judging from the blueprint of fairly extensive social reform proposed in the text, one cannot but suspect that the idea of universal destruction was probably meant to be invoked as a camouflage for political pleading.[11] Barbara Hendrischke has noted that the TPJ was a "corpus of texts from the beginnings of religious Daoism, embedded in Han dynasty cosmological fantasies and social Utopias."[12] In fact, the fin-de-siècle message was advertised at a much earlier time when the Han Empire was beginning its first decline. During the reign of Emperor Cheng 成 (32–8 BCE) in the Former or Western Han, Gan Zhongke 甘忠可 forged the *Tianguan li* 天官曆 (Calendar of Celestial Officials) and the *Baoyuan taiping jing* 苞元太平經 (Scripture of Burgeoning Universal Peace), in which he claimed that the Han house had encountered the end of heaven and earth, and that there should be a change of heaven's mandate (漢家逢天地之大終，當更受命於天).[13] The fact that the messianic message in the two esoteric forgeries was deemed alarming and revelatory shows that universal kingship was more than religious window dressing for political legitimacy and was taken seriously.

The message in the *Baoyuan taiping jing* was reiterated in the TPJ about two centuries later when the Han Empire was again threatened with dynastic downfall.[14] In emphasizing the impending danger of

the age, the TPJ always stigmatizes the age in which it was written or compiled as the time when Dao (the True Way) no longer reigns.[15] Dao in the TPJ has two connotations. First, it refers to the idea of an impersonal cosmic order, which moves in accord with a metaphysical division of time. Dao in this sense could also be interpreted as the notion of universal kingship such that when it reigns, the human world can enjoy a golden age of perfect living. If Dao goes into decline, it will wreak havoc and the world could possibly be brought to destruction. Throughout the historical portions of the metaphysical schema of time it is man's obedience or disobedience to Dao that determines the course of history. Second, Dao refers to the principle of life by which human beings can live to attain longevity or even the status of physical immortality. It is no coincidence that the warning of the progressive deterioration of the Dao was proclaimed at the time when the Han Empire was approaching the verge of its downfall.

According to the schematization of time in the TPJ, human history is periodized into three general epochs: High Antiquity (*shanggu* 上古), Middle Antiquity (*zhonggu* 中古), and Recent Antiquity (*xiagu* 下古),[16] and the rulers in these epochs are called High Sovereign (*shanghuang* 上皇), Middle Sovereign (*zhonghuang* 中皇), and Recent Sovereign (*xiahuang* 下皇) respectively.[17] Each epoch assumes a character of its own, which determines the moral character of its inhabitants to a significant degree. High Antiquity is the time when Dao prevails, and everything is well governed. Universal peace (*taiping* 太平) is ubiquitous.[18] People can nurture themselves because they can observe the way of life.[19] In Middle Antiquity, people neglect to nurture themselves and begin to depart from the principle of life. Recent Antiquity is a time of disorder. People risk their lives with the false belief that a lost life can be regained. Thus, they end up losing the way of life, and disorder begins to set in. However, people in Recent Antiquity are not held accountable for the universal disorder; it is rather because Recent Antiquity happens to be the time when *chengfu* 承負 retribution comes to reap its fruit.[20]

The TPJ notion of *chengfu* may have come from Han popular culture, but it can be traced back to an elite source.[21] It probably first appeared in the *Shi hanshenwu* 詩含神霧 (The Engulfing Holy Mist Commentary on the Book of Songs), an auxiliary text (*weishu* 緯書) to the Confucian Canon. The text says, "The meaning of *chengfu* is to support with hands from below and carry in the arms" (承負之義，謂以手承下而抱負之).[22] It should be noted that earlier when Dong Zhongshu explicated the meaning of filial devotion, he gave the literal meaning of *cheng* ("carry in the arms") an ethical bend. He said, "Whatever the father does, [the son] should receive with both hands and carry them on, not

daring to do less than his best as his father wishes. This is the way [of the son] to fulfill his humanity to the utmost" (諸父所為，其子皆奉承而續行之，不敢不致，如父之意，盡為人之道也).[23] It is clear from this statement that the son has an unshirkable hereditary obligation to carry on whatever his father has done in his own life. In a sense, the son's life can be understood as a continuation or extension of his father's. This continuation or extension, of course, is not physical or biological in a strict sense. However, in the context of a cosmology sustained with the primal force as was popular in Han times, father and son are linked together by this psychophysical energy, and, thus, the biological link is certainly more physical than theoretical. That is, the son's life indeed is a continuing part of his father's, there is only one life, as it were, lived by two individuals unified with the hereditary primal force. In reality, the term *fengcheng* (奉承) was typically used during Han times to refer to filial obligations, often specifically to the son's duty to pay sacrifice to his deceased father (*fengcheng zongmiao*奉承宗廟) and continue his bloodline (*fengcheng xuesi* 奉承血祀).[24]

Interpreted in the context of retribution, the TPJ notion of *chengfu* came to mean the receipt of burden or carrying over of the burden from one's ancestors. When asked the difference between *cheng* and *fu*, the Celestial Master explains,

> *Cheng* refers to what comes before whereas *fu* refers to what comes afterwards. This is [how] *cheng* [works]. The ancestors initially conduct themselves in observance of the mind of heaven, yet they lapse little by little without knowing. As time goes on, [their transgressions] add up to plenty. Now, the descendants in turn will inherit the consequences of their transgressions and will suffer from them over the generations. Thus, what comes before is called *cheng* and what comes afterwards is called *fu*. [In fact,] the overflowing calamity of *fu* is not caused by one single individual; it is rather lapses in successive generations between ancestors and descendants. That is why it is called *fu* (burden). *Fu* is what the ancestor unburdens on the descendant. The problem is that *cheng* and *fu* mutually add onto each other.
>
> 承者為前, 負者為後。承者迺謂先人本承天心而行, 小小失之, 不自知, 用日積久, 相聚為多。今後生人, 反無辜蒙其過謫, 連傳被其災, 故前為承, 後為負也。負者流災, 亦不由一人之治。比連不平, 前後更相負, 故名之為負。負者迺先人負於後生者也。病更相承負也。[25]

In short, *chengfu* is a kind of inherited retribution across generations.[26] The term itself is passive in tone.

The *chengfu* theory of retribution operates on both the human and cosmic levels. On the cosmic level, the *chengfu* retribution is realized in terms of historical epochs defined with respect to the degree of perfection of the cosmic Dao. It is the belief that the moral character of an epoch is completely predetermined by the degree of perfection of the cosmic Dao. The latter is in turn determined by the moral character of the previous epoch. Everything in an epoch is then predetermined and no change can be brought about by human effort. Such doctrine of total predetermination may be called hard destiny. Cosmic *chengfu* by nature is collective; indeed, it theoretically applies to every human being in a given epoch. People in a sense are innocent and sinned against.[27] Cosmic *chengfu* rationalizes the historical predicament in the late Han (i.e., Recent Antiquity) as the retribution for departing from the way of life practiced in the earlier epochs.[28] It is its operation on the cosmic level that made the *chengfu* theory of retribution a novel idea in late Han times because it offered a metaphysical explanation for the pervasive suffering as the Han Empire was tottering on the verge of debacle. As Barbara Hendrischke observes, "It is…obvious that a concept like *chengfu* could have had a role to play in the discourse of that period of wide-scale restructuring which commenced in the second century, when ancient China was on the point of disintegration."[29]

Perhaps the most graphic form of cosmic *chengfu* finds expression in astral fatalism. A person's account of moral merits and demerits is entered by gods in charge of destiny in the register book, called *mingji* 命籍 (Register of Destiny),[30] in which the year, month, day, and hour of his birth and death before he is born are also recorded.[31] In relation to human lifespan and human fortune, the TPJ definitively asserts

> There are noble and common people; there are also long and short lives. Each person receives a destiny from the *liujia* constellation.
> 人有貴賤, 壽命有長短, 各稟命六甲。[32]

This is fatalism par excellence or hard destiny. It is the belief that everything in one's life is predetermined and no change can be brought about by human effort.

The *chengfu* theory on the human level suggests that one receives, at birth, the burden left over from one's ancestor(s), a brute fact that is not in one's control to avoid. In retributory terms, human *chengfu* is basically the belief that the merits gained from the individual's good deeds or demerits resulting from evil transgressions can be transmitted to his descendants. The TPJ says,

> As for human behavior, people who have vigorously done good deeds may often turn out to suffer bad consequences; those who insistently committed evils may turn out to have good results. Thus people say it is not right to do good. People who fall into the former category actually are held responsible for the faults made by their ancestors. The accumulation of the transmitted evils generation after generation brings them harm. And people fall into the latter category because the great merits accumulated by their ancestors have then come down to their credit.
> 凡人之行, 或有力行善, 反常得惡, 或有力行惡, 反得善, 因自言為賢者非也。力行善反得惡者, 是承負先人之過, 流災前後積來害此人也。其行惡反得善者, 是先人深有積畜大功, 來流及此人也。[33]

Thus, human *chengfu* also connotes a sense of hard destiny as people are always born with a stock of merits or demerits they did not earn. In this connection, the Celestial Master was well aware of the predicament of parents and ancestors as he said, "It is not easy to be an ancestor or a parent; you should think for your descendants and do not make them suffer the misfortune of *chengfu*" (為人先生祖父母不容易也，當為後生者計，可毋使子孫有承負之厄).[34] Yet, the TPJ also emphasizes that "if one could do good works many thousand times more [than the offenses committed by their ancestors], even though there were surplus evils left over by his ancestors, evils would not come upon him" (能行大功萬萬倍之，先人雖有餘殃，不能及此人也).[35] Human *chengfu* then turns out to be soft destiny as ancestral deeds only determine how a person may start his life but human effort is given room to change his destiny.[36]

Cosmic *chengfu* and human *chengfu* are interrelated. Cosmic *chengfu* rationalizes the political instability and moral depravity in the late Han as metaphysical retribution inherited from earlier epochs. People themselves in Recent Antiquity are not held responsible for their suffering because it is only the natural result of the progressive deterioration of the cosmic Dao manifested in the human world along the scale of metaphysical time. On the other hand, due to the effect of ancestral retribution, one cannot assume full control of one's destiny, as human *chengfu* dictates. Fortune or misfortune might be completely beyond one's ability to influence. Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that the *chengfu* theory of retribution on both the cosmic and human levels is tinged with a form of fatalism.

Yet, tension pulls between cosmic *chengfu* and human *chengfu* because human effort, indeed, can play a vital role in the shaping of human destiny, namely, it can gain a favorable balance of merits by

redressing the demerits left over by one's ancestors. After all, if people in Recent Antiquity are nothing but passive recipients of cosmic retribution, what is the point of propagandizing a religious millennium? In order to initiate a change in a given epoch, human effort must be assumed to be efficacious, to a significant degree, in the process of change. In fact, the TPJ, in explaining the religious nature of *taiping* (universal peace), expressly states that its core message is about retribution (*baoying* 報應) determined by the individual.[37] Thus, the TPJ announces that regardless of the epoch they live in, people have their own volitional control over their moral behavior even though they are sinned against and afflicted by *chengfu* retribution. For example, the TPJ asserts that one's lifespan can be extended or reduced in accordance with one's moral behavior.[38] In fact, even ascension to heaven in broad daylight is possible if one proves oneself virtuous enough.[39]

Thus, the TPJ indeed makes two claims. First, it says the amount of merits or demerits left over from previous generations is always predetermined. It is beyond human effort in this generation to start a new life with an equal balance of merits and demerits (if that in fact happens, it is only the natural result of the mutual compensation of one's ancestors' good deeds and evil transgressions). This is hard destiny. Second, the TPJ says that descendants diligent in doing good works can cancel out their ancestral demerits. This is soft destiny. Hard destiny and soft destiny evidently are at odds. Cosmic *chengfu* in the form of astral fatalism runs counter to *chengfu* retribution on the human level that allows change in destiny through moral cultivation to redress one's ancestral retributive burden. This apparent inconsistency truthfully reflects the dilemma of the late Han religious Daoists who tried to justify moral fortuity with a belief in hard destiny on the one hand, and maintain a moral order by perpetuating the time-honored belief in moral retribution on the other. The fact that the TPJ emphasizes that good people in High Antiquity would always be duly rewarded suggests that good conduct was not invariably honored in other epochs.[40] The Celestial Master was certainly aware of the perennial moral impasse. If the moral character and political condition are completely predetermined by the cosmic Dao in progressive deterioration, how could human effort initiate a significant change in such a postlapsarian world? In spite of its effort to offer a coherent theory of history and ethics by reconciling cosmic *chengfu* and human *chengfu*, the TPJ does not offer a solution to this theoretical quandary which epitomizes the tension between the lure of destiny and the yen of honoring one's dignity to live a life in one's own control.

Mixing Destiny and Retribution in the *Xiang'er Commentary*

The *Taiping jing* was not alone in exemplifying the moral predicament of the people in late Han China; the *Xiang'er Commentary on the Laozi* 老子想爾注, a religious Daoist scripture by the Celestial Masters which came a little later than the *Taiping jing* in the early third century, was also consumed with the overarching concern with retribution and hard destiny.[41] While the doctrine of hard destiny is discussed in the *Xiang'er Commentary*, the mutilation of the text makes a detailed interpretation of this doctrine difficult. The commentary advocates transfer of merits, namely, one's merits and demerits based on moral behavior would be inherited by one's descendants.[42] The doctrine of hard destiny may be considered as a corollary to the belief in transfer of merits. A person is inexorably predestined to enjoy a social status in accord with the stock of merits transmitted to him by his ancestors.[43] In a few places the text emphasizes that emperors are decreed by heaven to fulfill their mission in the human world. Whoever attempts to play that role without heaven's mandate is doomed to failure.[44] Similarly, in terms of other social stations than the throne, the text once again stresses, they are a natural result of one's ancestor's leftover merits. Therefore, they cannot be acquired through effort.[45] Perhaps this doctrine of hard destiny is most clearly stated when the commentary says, "The wealthy, the noble, the poor and the humble should each in their own way follow Dao in order to fulfill their [social] roles. Dao will be with him who is sincere [in following Dao]. The poor and the humble should not consider themselves ignoble and mean, and try to attain wealth and nobility through strenuous effort. Those who do not strain to get [whatever is not predestined to them] will not lose their social roles, and that is why they can survive long."[46]

The *Xiang'er* doctrine of hard destiny and retribution perhaps found its immediate predecessor in the Han Confucian historian Ban Biao 班彪 (3–54). In his essay, "Wangming lun" 王命論 (On the mandate of the king), Ban Biao concludes that the two major factors leading to the receipt of heaven's mandate to be a king are merits accumulated from one's ancestral line and a favorable historical destiny.[47] Both factors are accorded equal emphasis.

As the political and social conditions deteriorated in the late Han, a concern with personal fortune became acute. One good example is that during the Han dynasty, the government ordered that a stone chamber for the worship of Queen Mother of the West (Xiwang Mu 西王母) be established in each prefecture, county, and village in order that people

could pay sacrifice to her for long life and fertility. Moreover, the worship of Queen Mother of the West was one of the dominant motifs in Han tomb brick engravings.[48] Most notably, the images of Laozi and Buddha were niched in the same shrine in the palace for worship during the late Han period. And before long this practice became fashionable among the common people as well. During the Wei-Jin period, local shrines for native heroes and Buddhist temples were honored with equal respect as sacred sites where propitiation for blessings took place. Indeed, this utilitarian motivation persisted throughout the early medieval period.

The recovery of the fragmented *Xiang'er Commentary* from Dunhuang attests to the passionate pursuit of blessings in late Han China. In many places of the text, the gist of the commentary centers on the idea of attaining fortune (*huofu* 獲福). The commentary also relentlessly condemns other contemporary religious teachings and categorically dismisses them as "scams in the guise of religious Daoism" (偽技稱道教); they are impotent to invite heavenly fortune.[49] The fact that "scams in the guise of religious Daoism" ran rampant with advertisements on fortune attainment indicates that the late Han people were keenly concerned with their suffering and anxiously looking for a new avenue that would lead to a happy life. Notably, the commentary attacks the Confucian doctrine and claims that it is inferior to the teaching of the religious Dao. Although it encourages the practice of Confucian ethics, the commentary probably does not consider the Confucian doctrine alone efficacious to invite heavenly fortune.[50] Evidently, the inadequacy of the Confucian doctrine perhaps exposed most poignantly in late Han governance was widely acknowledged and gave rise to other doctrinal claims to offer new avenues to personal happiness.

The very notion of attaining fortune through human effort implies a belief in soft destiny. Here, we can see the doctrine of hard destiny and the doctrine of soft destiny are mixed in the *Xiang'er Commentary*. For instance, the commentary says, "If you want to seek physical immortality and heavenly blessings, the key is to be in communion with Dao, abide by its precepts, remain faithful, and commit not the same mistake twice, otherwise, your offenses will be registered in the celestial department" (欲求仙壽天福，要在通道，守誡守信，不為貳過。罪成結在天曹).[51] The idea of celestial department is important because it explicitly states that moral reward and retribution are left to the justice of heaven. The same idea also appears in the *Taiping jing* and it certainly resonates with its doctrine of astral fatalism.[52] Although the authority of heaven was questioned by many Han literati, it did not

lose its grip on the popular imagination. For example, Qin Jia 秦嘉 (fl. mid-second century), a poet of the Later Han, in one of his poems to his wife wrote, "The August Spirit is impartial; good deeds will incur heavenly fortune" (皇靈無私親，為善荷天祿).[53] Heaven remained the judge of human morality.[54]

As regards inviting heavenly fortune upon oneself, the *Xiang'er Commentary* emphasizes the importance of accumulating merits by practicing moral virtues that basically come from Confucian ethics.[55] By accumulating one's refined vital force (*jingqi* 精氣), one will be in close contact with heaven, and one's vital spirit (*jingshen* 精神) will be able to communicate with it.[56] Hence, whenever one is in danger, heaven will immediately come to one's rescue.[57] More important is the belief that merits and demerits, as noted above, are transferable to one's descendants.[58]

Merits and demerits seem to be measured in terms of the purity of one's vital force, and their transference is based on the transmittability of vital force, which is considered the basic constituent of a human being. The theory of transferable merits seems to be predicated on the primal-force cosmology in Han times. Zhao Qi 趙岐 (d. 201), the earliest commentator of the *Mencius*, provides us with an important piece of evidence. He said, "Extraordinary virtues and enormities will flow over to later generations. Only after they flow from grand grandfather to grandchild [i.e., five generations] will the vital forces of goodness and evil be exhausted" (大德大凶，流及後世，自高祖至玄孫，善惡之氣乃斷).[59] Another famous Confucian, Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200) in his *Yiwei qian zaodu* 易緯乾鑿度, an auxiliary text to the *Book of Changes*, also made a similar claim that ancestral merits could only last for five generations.[60] Therefore, it is no surprise that late Han religious Daoists propagated the idea of transferable merits on the basis of transmittable vital force. In fact, the TPJ expressly says that *chengfu* retribution from one's ancestors is limited to five generations only.[61]

Much like the *chengfu* theory in the *Taiping jing*, the *Xiang'er* doctrine of hard destiny also runs counter to the belief in retribution in terms of transferable merits because merits require conscious effort to accumulate in one's life. Here, hard destiny and soft destiny are at loggerheads again, but they confront each other only because the late Han religious Daoists, unlike the Confucians who did not tend to mix destiny and retribution, tried to integrate them into a holism of ethics and religious redemption. The tension between moral cultivation and predestination has yet to be reconciled.

Hard Destiny among Early Medieval Confucians and the Neo-Daoist Idea of *Ziran*

Hard destiny and soft destiny were brought to a clash in religious Daoism in the late Han, but beliefs in hard destiny and soft destiny actually came decades earlier and were embraced separately. In his *Lunheng* 論衡 (The Balance for Arguments), Wang Chong 王充 (27–97) distinguishes three kinds of destinies commonly held by Han Confucians in his time as follows: [62]

> It is said that three kinds of destiny can be distinguished: natural, merit-based, and accidental. One speaks of natural destiny if someone's luck is the simple consequence of his original constitution. His constitution being well-ordered and his bones good, he need not toil in order to obtain happiness, since his luck comes of itself. This is natural destiny. Merit-based destiny comes into play when a man becomes happy only by dint of hard work, but meets with misfortune as soon as he yields to his propensities and gives rein to his desires. This is to be understood as merit-based destiny. As for accidental destiny, a man may, contrary to his expectations, reap bad fruits upon all his deeds—he will encounter misfortune or disasters, which will strike him from without. Therefore one can speak of accidental destiny.
> 說命有三: 一曰正命, 二曰隨命, 三曰遭命。正命謂本禀之, 自得吉也。性然骨善, 故不假操行以求福而吉自至, 故曰正命。隨命者, 戮力操行而吉福至, 縱情施欲而凶禍到, 故曰隨命。遭命者, 行善得惡, 非所冀望, 逢遭於外而得凶禍, 故曰遭命。[63]

While the idea of natural destiny Wang Chong reported is interpreted from a materialistic point of view, the destiny described in the TPJ is determined by stellar configuration.[64] Despite this difference, the two ideas of natural destiny are consistent with each other. Both highlight the fact that destiny is beyond human control. On the other hand, the human *chengfu* theory is consistent with the idea of merit-based destiny reported by Wang Chong because both allow the possibility of changing one's destiny by human behavior.[65] Still, the *chengfu* theory in the sense of transgenerational retribution can also justify the belief in accidental destiny reported by Wang Chong because bad fruits reaped from good deeds could be explained in terms of one's ancestral ledger of merits. Thus, it is evident that not only did the TPJ theory of *chengfu* share the primal-force cosmology and popular beliefs in

retribution, but it was indeed deeply rooted in Confucian ideas of destiny that could be traced back at least decades before.[66] It should be noted, however, that the various beliefs in destiny in the first century were apparently embraced by different thinkers who did not feel obliged to reconcile them. In other words, they each upheld their respective belief firmly and presumably had dissuaded themselves of other beliefs of destiny. Even Wang Chong himself did not indicate that tension existed among the conflicting beliefs in destiny that he neatly pigeonholed. It was only the religious Daoists in the late Han who attempted to reconcile hard destiny and soft destiny, albeit somewhat incoherently and without success.

It was right at this juncture that Xu Gan 徐幹 (170–217), one of the eminent Confucian scholars of his time, expended considerable energy to fathom the meanings of destiny; he no longer found them discrete and tried to make them coherent to himself. He said,

> When the world is in order, those who practice goodness receive fortune, while those who commit evil meet with misfortune. When the world is in disorder, those who practice goodness do not receive fortune, while those commit evil do not receive misfortune, this is aberration. An intelligent man will not doubt the normal Way in the face of aberration. . . . To receive bad fortune as a result of doing good is called destiny. To receive good fortune as a result of committing evil is called luck. [An intelligent man] will simply abide by his aspirations.
> 世之治也, 行善者獲福, 為惡者得禍。及其亂也, 行善者不獲福, 為惡者不得禍, 變數也。知者不以變數疑常道 … 夫施吉報凶謂之命, 施凶報吉謂之幸。守其所志而已矣。[67]

Whether or not the world is in order apparently is beyond the control of any individual, and in this particular sense, the world into which a person is born is predetermined to be orderly or chaotic. A hue of fatalism is visible. Destiny remains capricious. Nevertheless, like the religious Daoists who appealed to the popular yearning for fortune, Xu Gan was also interested in seeking personal happiness. Similarly, he was also struggling to reconcile the conflict between hard destiny and soft destiny. Yet, the idea of "aberration" seems to betray a sigh of resignation to destiny. As Xu Gan literally died at the end of the Han dynasty, the surrendering gesture in his attempt to reconcile hard and soft destinies and find a bearing in life marked the shifting attitude toward fatalism in early medieval China.

As the Han Empire finally came to a close with the establishment of the Wei dynasty (220–265) by the Cao 曹 family, hard destiny indeed gained widespread currency, eclipsing the pursuit of soft destiny. The hard fatalistic worldview expressed in the *Xiang'er Commentary* and the *Taiping jing* persisted in the Wei-Jin period and seems to have been shared by the literati in general. Sun Ao 孫翱 (fl. ca. 220), for instance, believed that life and death are determined by destiny and that they cannot be changed by human effort. Unlike Xu Gan, Sun claimed that the sage's teaching that accumulated virtues will bring fortune is only an expedient means to exhort people to morality.[68] Li Kang 李康, who served the Wei court during Emperor Ming's 明 reign (227–237), wrote a treatise on destiny ("Yunming lun" 運命論). Based on his analysis of the conditions of the encounters of many historical figures with fortune and misfortune, Li Kang concluded that a state's order and disorder depends on luck; a person's adversity and prosperity depends on destiny; and his honor and humbleness depends on the time. The sage is he who takes delight in heaven and knows his destiny.[69]

Though all these Confucians acknowledged the uncertainty of retribution, unlike Qin Jia who still believed in the impartiality of heaven a century ago, they tended to dismiss an ultimate judge that guarantees the justice of the human world. In fact, Yang Quan 楊泉 (fl. ca. 250) expressly said that destiny of life and death is beyond the compass of spirits (*shenming* 神明).[70] In other words, destiny is simply unknowable. Nevertheless, third-century Confucians still believed that there was a certain kind of causal relation between human behavior and its consequences. This broad agreement of belief eventually found philosophical expression in Wang Bi's idea of *ziran* 自然 as causation and necessity, and prepared for the acceptance of the Buddhist theory of karmic retribution in early medieval China. In fact, hard destiny could find philosophical support in the *xuanxue* idea of *ziran* as well.

Since the late Han period, there was a keen interest among intellectuals in the study of *Yijing* and Yang Xiong's 揚雄 (53 BCE.–18 CE) *Taixuan* 太玄 (The Grand Mystery).[71] Such an interest indicates an epistemic shift from a practical concern with politics to an essentially philosophical quest for the ultimate ground of human existence. This new epistemic concern turned out to characterize much of early medieval Chinese thought, and in the fifth century this kind of philosophical study of the Mysterious, that is, the sublime Dao, was officially called "*xuanxue*" 玄學 (sometimes rendered "Dark Learning" but more commonly known as Neo-Daoism in English).[72] Wang Bi's commentaries on the *Laozi* and *Yijing*, and Guo Xiang's commentaries on the

Zhuangzi became the major philosophical sources that laid the textual foundation for the development of *xuanxue*.[73]

The idea of *ziran* as self-nature or spontaneity can be traced back at least to classical Daoism.[74] In the *Laozi* (ch. 25), heaven refers to regularity or the physical sky, and *ziran*, the self-nature (essentially its non-purposiveness) of heaven, should be emulated by humans. In the Later Han, Wang Chong began to conceive of *ziran* in a new way. While admitting the non-purposive nature of heaven, he further argued that *ziran* connotes a sense of predetermination and contingency (適偶之數) and tied it to a person's destiny (*ming* 命); as he put it, *ziran* is the "master of fortune and misfortune" (吉凶之主).[75]

In Wang Bi's ontological thought,[76] *ziran* refers to the self-nature of Dao, which is the ontic source of the myriad things. Hence, *ziran* also denotes the self-nature of the myriad things as it accounts for the way things are. The self-nature of a thing determines the characteristics of that particular thing such that a pig, let us say, will not be mixed up with a calf. In this sense, self-nature is a kind of inner necessity. It is what determines the myriad things the way they are. On a phenomenal level, *ziran* refers to the self-nature of things as well as a principle of causation which defines the unalterable interrelationship among things or states of affair.[77] Furthermore, this principle of causation is knowable.[78] Yet, it is not exactly clear how the ontological *ziran* as the self-nature of Dao is consistent with the phenomenal *ziran* as a principle of causation. Perhaps, the nature of a particular thing involves an inherent relationship it forms with certain other things, and vice versa. This interrelationship is causative and, thus, necessary. But Wang's definition of *ziran* as a principle of causation is evaluative because *ziran* does not only refer to the natural state of being, but also implies a goal-orientation. The goal in question, for Wang Bi, refers to personal welfare and specifically, avoidance of political trouble. Thus, the observance of the *ziran* principle of causation will be effective in changing one's destiny.

The efficacy of human effort in shaping one's destiny becomes ambiguous in Guo Xiang's conception of *ziran*. For Guo Xiang, *ziran* refers to the unalterable inborn nature (*xing* 性) of potentialities of the myriad things. Besides, as *xing* is mandated by *ming* (命), its "givenness" also connotes a notion of "fate" in terms of accidentality and immutability—a notion foreshadowed by Wang Chong. On top of this, this "fate" is unknowable because it is a product of random change. Thus, Wang Bi's *ziran* as inner necessity of the myriad things was modified into Guo Xiang's notion of inborn physical nature that predetermines the

subsequent development of the myriad things as well as their destinies. Moreover, inborn nature is called predestined lot, or allotment (*fen* 分).[79] That is, a being's inborn nature predetermines its course of development. This trajectory of development of inborn capacities is known as "fate" and the natural unfolding of such trajectory is a process of *ziran* realizing itself. Such a notion of *ziran* led Guo Xiang to oppose purposive activities (*zhi* 知) because they are much too powerful and destructive to interfere with the self-nature of the myriad things.[80]

Thus, while it is debatable if Guo Xiang's idea of *ziran* actually means unearned fate, [81] historically, however, its singular connotation of chance was tied to the issue of human endowment and became a popular consensus in "pure conversations" (*qingtan* 清談) in early medieval times.[82] As the goodness and badness of human endowment was understood as a coincidence of forces beyond a person's control, a sense of hard destiny is too difficult to miss. A well-known example of pure conversation will suffice to illustrate the point here. On one occasion, Yin Hao 殷浩 (306–356) asked, "If *ziran* is without deliberate intentions (*wuxin* 無心) in the matter of human endowment, then how does it happen that it is precisely the good men who are few and the evil many?" And Liu Tan 劉惔 replied, "It is like pouring water over the ground. Just of its own accord it flows and spreads this way and that, but almost never in exactly square or round shapes." Liu's reply indeed drove home Guo Xiang's idea of *ziran* as accident and coincidence. Whether one is born good or evil is a matter of accidental encounter (*yu* 遇) because *ziran* has no deliberate intentions. Liu's remark was then enthusiastically applauded.[83] This widespread acclaim no doubt betrayed the subconscious acceptance of hard destiny as a fact of life in early medieval China, no matter how vague it might be as a philosophic concept.[84]

Not only did Guo Xiang's idea of *ziran* wield influence on the circle of *xuanxue* thinkers, but it also found its way into religious Daoism. According to Ge Hong, who quoted religious Daoist scriptures such as the *Yuqian jing* 玉鈐經 (Scripture of the Jade Seal), whether or not one can attain physical immortality depends on one's destiny. If one encounters at birth the primal force of physical immortality, this is one's destiny received from *ziran*. Hence, the propensity for believing in the truth of physical immortality is already formed in the fetus. When one grows up, one will definitely encounter an immortal in person and receives teaching from him. Without this destiny predetermined at birth, one will never believe in the way of physical immortality, nor seek for it. Thus, one will never attain physical immortality.[85]

Zhang Zhan 張湛 (fl. ca. 317), who subscribed to Guo Xiang's *ziran* as "fate," went a step farther to advocate hedonism, since human effort, to him, is of no avail to mold human destiny. He said,

> Fate is an infallible appointment, a predestined lot. Although an event may have yet to materialize, its course [of development] has already been fixed. If one thinks one's lifespan depends on nourishment, and prosperity and frustration in life hinges on intelligence, one is confused about the course determined by heaven.
> 命者, 必然之期, 素定之分也。雖此事未驗, 而此理已然。若以壽夭存於御養, 窮達係於智力, 此惑於天理也。[86]

The "course determined by heaven," also known as the course of autogeneity (自然之理), is impersonal and impervious to human intelligence.[87] Thus, if fate is not operative as it is, Zhang Zhan insists, then benevolent and intelligent people will invariably live a long life while cruel and foolish people will invariably die a premature death. But in reality, this is not necessarily true (若其非命，則仁智者必壽。凶愚者必夭，而為必然也).[88] Zhang even went so far as to say that our action or inaction is not determined by ourselves and the actual power of determination is beyond our understanding (動止非我，則非智所識也).[89]

Given such fatalistic outlook, it is no surprise that Zhang Zhan would espouse a philosophy of *carpe diem*. To him, life is a temporary coalescence of primal forces and a thing such as man is but a transitory flickering of intelligence. Given that man prefers comfort to labor, a person does not know how to appreciate the fun of life if he does not give free rein to what pleases his nature but instead fetters himself with benevolence and rites.[90] Zhang Zhan's advocacy of hedonism represented the peak of the development of the *xuanxue* idea of *ziran* as immutable fate; it found its way into a wide spectrum of literati in early medieval China and thus reinforced the growing belief in hard destiny since the late Han.

Clearly, Zhang Zhan's doctrine of fatalism could not offer much hope for a meaningful life because human effort was considered futile, if not in fact harmful. This gloomy worldview indeed loomed large in the early medieval period. Even Xie An 謝安 (320–385), the famous ambitious Prime Minister of the Eastern Jin, confessed to the monk Zhi Dun 支遁 (314–366) that he could not but grieve over the fact that life is like a temporary lodging. Even his glorious political career would eventually vanish.[91] This pessimistic worldview was acutely sensitive to

the limitations of human effort, and those limitations in turn tended to warrant a romantic spirit of general despair.

When we come to the fifth century, Gu Jizhi 顧覬之 (d. 467) seems to have given a systematic elaboration of the doctrine of fatalism. According to his biography in the *Nan shi* 南史 (History of the Southern Dynasties), Gu argued that the lot predetermined by destiny is ineluctable, and it cannot be changed by human intelligence. Therefore, one should remain humble to the Way, have faith in heaven and let oneself go along with destiny.[92] Though he himself did not write on the topic of fatalism, Gu had his students compose an essay with the title of "Dingming lun" 定命論 (On predetermined destiny).[93] While it is not clear if the *xuanxue* idea of *ziran* played a role in Gu's argument for fatalism, it certainly lent philosophical support to people in early medieval China who opted for a fatalistic worldview.[94]

It is, then, clear that the belief in hard destiny prevailed in early medieval China. Yet, despite its wide currency, this other-oriented approach to explicate moral fortuity did not command universal respect. Even as the religious Daoists were striving to integrate hard destiny and soft destiny into a coherent system of beliefs, Buddhism had arrived in China and became implicated in the native Chinese search for an explanation for moral fortuity that could set their minds at peace. Buddhism opened up a new spiritual universe to the Chinese, but as far as the problem of moral fortuity is concerned, the Buddhist doctrine of karma offered an ingenious, if not entirely original, approach to revisit it. The belief in karmic retribution represented a self-oriented approach that grounded human destiny on man's own moral cultivation. In early medieval China, it attracted an extraordinarily large following. In fact, in the long process of Buddhism's assimilation into Chinese culture, the karma doctrine often became a liability and bore the brunt of severe condemnation from its critics—this very fact betrays the agonizing predicament about destiny and moral retribution in early medieval China, yet ironically, the very liability also facilitated the process and its eventual success.

Karma in Early Medieval Chinese Buddhism

As suggested earlier, the emergence of the *chengfu* theory and the Confucian attempt to strike a balance between destiny and retribution indicate an existential and intellectual need to account for the historical predicament and personal suffering people encountered in early medieval China. This need paved the way for the triumphant march of

Buddhism into China, and predisposed the Chinese people to understand Buddhism almost exclusively in terms of its doctrine of karma and transmigration. The success of the Buddhist theory of karmic retribution lies in its removal of the contradictions inherent in the *chengfu* theory by introducing the idea of individual karma and rejecting the worldview of hard destiny. In what follows, I shall not attempt to give a panoramic picture of the karma doctrine. Rather, I shall discuss a few of its aspects that proved to be relevant to resolving the dilemma with the belief in unpredictable destiny and the belief in effort-based retribution.

The Buddhist doctrine of karma was introduced to the Chinese virtually as soon as the religion arrived in China. One of its most succinct presentations is found in Zhi Qian's 支謙 (fl. 220–252) *Foshuo Bojing chao* 佛說孛經鈔. It says,

> Between heaven and earth, everything hinges on evil and fortune. Whether a person does good deeds or commits evil, they will follow him like a shadow. A deceased person abandons his body, yet his karmic impulses will not dissipate. This is just like growing grains. The seeds will disintegrate under the soil while the roots will give birth to stalks and leaves, and grains will grow above. When a person gives rise to karmic impulses, they will circulate like the flame from one candle to another. The candlewick may burn out, yet the flame will continue to light without extinction. A person's deeds can cause evil and fortune. It can be compared to him writing in the evening. When the light is out, what he has written is still around. Similarly, a person's soul will follow his karmic impulses and becomes reborn ceaselessly in the cycle [of birth-and-death]....At death a person's soul will depart; it follows his karmic impulses and goes on to its next birth. Just like the turning wheel of a vehicle, [this process of rebirth] never leaves the ground.
> 天地之間, 一由罪福。人作善惡, 如影隨形。死者棄身, 其行不亡。譬如種穀, 種敗於下, 根生莖葉, 實出於上。作行不斷, 譬如燈燭, 展轉然之, 故炷雖消, 火續不滅。行有罪福, 如人夜書, 火滅字存。魂神隨行, 轉生不斷。… 人死神去, 隨行往生, 如車輪轉, 不得離地。[95]

In this portrayal of the karma doctrine, fortune and misfortune are of pivotal importance. This view doubtless found sympathy among its audience in early medieval China. Moreover, the scripture introduces the idea of karmic retribution, that is, that moral conduct determines the nature of one's future life. It appears to have similarities with and

differences from the indigenous Chinese beliefs in retribution. While the similarities made the Buddhist doctrine of karma intelligible to the Chinese, its distinctiveness was not only consistent with indigenous Chinese beliefs in retribution, but also turned out to be able to redress their inadequacy. For people who were not sympathetic to a foreign religion in early medieval China, the karma doctrine might not be an ideal or desirable doctrine to be pursued, it was nevertheless a new theory which superseded, but not necessarily rejected, the existing theories of retribution-based ethics.[96]

The advocacy of the karma doctrine was heralded in early Chinese Buddhist apologetics. Mouzi's 牟子 *Lihuo lun* 理惑論 (Dispelling doubts) was a treatise probably written by one of the earliest Chinese Buddhist laymen in the early third century.[97] It aimed at defending the existence of an immortal soul in the name of Buddhism and proselytizing the religion on that basis. It should be noted that the ultimate reason for adhering to Buddhism, as suggested in the treatise, lies in a deliberate calculation of moral reward, rather than a genuine faith in Buddhist dharma per se. About the latter, Mouzi himself did not clearly explain. The treatise was written in the form of an imaginary dialogue, and it reads in part as follows:

> The questioner said, "The Buddhists say that after a person dies, he will be reborn. I do not believe in the truth of these words."
>
> Mouzi said, ". . . the soul never perishes. Only the body decays. The body is like the roots and leaves of the five grains, and the soul is like the seeds and kernels of the five grains. When roots and leaves are done with their growth, they inevitably die. But do seeds and kernels perish as well? If a person has attained the Way, his body alone will perish [when he dies]. . . . Someone said, "If a person follows the Way, he will die. And if a person does not follow the Way, he will also die. What difference is there?"
>
> Mouzi said, ". . . if a person has attained the Way, his soul will go to the abode of happiness when he dies.[98] If a person commits evil, his soul will suffer misfortune when he dies."
>
> 問曰:「佛道言人死當復更生。僕不信此言之審也。」 牟子曰:「… 魂神固不滅矣, 但身自朽爛耳。身譬如五穀之根葉, 魂神如五穀之種實。根葉生必當死, 種實豈有終亡? 得道身滅耳。」… 或曰:「爲道亦死, 不爲道亦死, 有何異乎?」牟子曰:「… 有道雖死, 神歸福堂。爲惡既死, 神當其殃。」[99]

Based on Mouzi's argument, a person's soul can go to the "abode of happiness" if he possesses the Way; this was the actual, if not the

sole, motivation that the Buddhists held out to the convert would-be. Obviously, it was a utilitarian exhortation. Later in the treatise, the Buddhists were accused of being inhumane and unfilial on the basis of a story of Prince Sudana, who, as Śakyamuni in a former life, forfeited the throne by his generosity. In response, Mouzi argued that Prince Sudana realized the impermanence of this world, and that wealth and treasures did not truly belong to him. He then donated generously in order to accomplish the Great Way. As a result, his father's kingdom enjoyed a long life, and was immune from the attacks of its enemies. When Sudana eventually became a Buddha, his parents and brothers also transcended this world (*dushi* 度世),[100] namely, they went to the abode of happiness. If this is called unfilial or inhumane, Mouzi queried, what then should be considered humane and filial?[101] Once again, it is clear that Mouzi's retort used a utilitarian argument. He examined the consequences of following the Great Way in terms of the benefits Sudana's parents and brothers received. Although Mouzi did mention Sudana's spiritual achievement as a Buddha, this does not seem to constitute the thrust of his argument.

Mouzi's utilitarian justification for believing in Buddhism echoed and was indeed inspired by the pragmatic concern with personal fortune in the late Han period, and in this sense addressed a fundamental concern of the time. The pragmatic concern about personal fortune, as discussed above, was equally prevalent among the elite stratum and the popular stratum. In an anonymous treatise, "Zhengwu lun" 正誣論 (In defense of calumny), written in the middle of the fourth century, Buddhism was allegedly accused as follows: The *śramaṇas* in the Capital and Luoyang were many. Yet it had never been known that they could lengthen the lifespan of the emperor, or harmonize yin and yang such that people would become wealthy and the year plentiful. Neither could they get rid of calamities nor ward off epidemics, nor subdue disturbances.[102] Evidently, all these charges were pragmatically rather than theologically based. Mouzi's Buddhist apologetics must be understood in such light.

As Mouzi's apology consciously portrayed, the overriding concern with regard to personal fortune in the early third century was moral retribution. Traditional Chinese beliefs suggest that retribution always takes place in one's life. Yet, retribution in fact may not always exact its due before one dies. Thus, traditional Chinese beliefs in retribution are undermined.[103] The famous pastoral poet, Tao Qian 陶潛 (d. 427), in one of his poems, gave vent to his anguish over this drawback in the Chinese beliefs in retribution. He lamented, "Accumulation of good, it is said, would bring about reward/ Yet Boyi and Shuqi were [starving to death] in the Western Mountain/ Insofar as good and evil do not bring about

matching retribution/ Why bother to make such an empty claim"(積善云有報，夷叔在西山。善惡苟不應，何事立空言)?[104] Similarly, the beliefs in transgenerational retribution as expounded in the *Taiping jing* also end up holding people other than the moral agent himself responsible for his own fortune or misfortune. A strong sense of injustice thus arises.

With its corollary that all defiled sentient beings will be bound to endless rebirths, the Buddhist doctrine of karma proved to overcome this drawback in indigenous Chinese beliefs in retribution. Retribution was no longer limited to one single cycle of birth and death. For instance, Huiyuan 慧遠 (334–416), who was the leader of the Buddhist circle in his time in the south, realized the need to patch up this pothole in indigenous Chinese beliefs in retribution. According to Huiyuan, there are three kinds of retribution. When misfortune befalls a good man, it is because he has done evil in his previous life. When fortune befalls an evil man, it is because he has earned merits in his previous life. As for those who have done good deeds or committed wrongdoings in this life, and have yet to receive any retribution, it is because it is not yet due.[105] Huiyuan's theory appears to have been a complex of beliefs that might have integrated the religious Daoist human *chengfu* theory of retribution on the human level and the Buddhist belief in rebirth.

Although the karma doctrine is consistent with the belief in accumulated merits, it does not, in theory, allow transfer of merits. Transfer of merits implies that merits can be unearned, and unearned merits certainly mean that one can reap the fruit of other people's moral effort. This position appears to be unethical. Prohibition of merit transfer runs afoul of indigenous Chinese beliefs in transgenerational retribution in terms of household unit.[106] Of course, in Huiyuan's theory, transgenerational retribution does not have to involve a person's ancestral merits, because karma is now defined personally. Everyone is held accountable for their own conduct only. Huiyuan's theory no doubt could offer psychological assurance for those who anguished over the apparent injustice of retribution. Nevertheless, this theory also has its own defect. That is, no one can tell when their retribution is due, and so anguish might not be completely dispelled. In any case, the Buddhists offered a theory of retribution with more persuasive force than those of the Confucians and religious Daoists in early medieval China.

The karma doctrine presented in the *Foshuo Bojing chao* has its basis in the principle of causation. A given cause will invariably generate a corresponding effect. Like the turning wheel of a vehicle, the process of rebirth never leaves the ground. Karmic retribution is immutable. The same idea was reiterated in other Buddhist scriptures translated in

the early medieval period. Evidently, the karma doctrine is compatible with the idea of *ziran* in the *xuanxue* philosophy of Wang Bi and Guo Xiang, as it is also characterized by internal necessity, autogeneity, and immutability.[107] For instance, the Buddha reportedly warns his disciples that although a person may be born a human being, the condition of his life can vary drastically. Thus, he might be born in the borderlands rather than the central region of the empire where he can learn the Way, or he might be born deaf, or dumb, or blind such that he cannot understand the good dharma, because he did not cultivate any roots of faith (*śraddhendriya*) in his previous life, nor did he have faith in his *śramaṇas*, brahmins as well as his parents and brothers.[108] This suggests that a person is endowed with a certain kind of inborn nature which is predetermined in his previous life.[109] Yet, like Guo Xiang's ideas of *xing* and *ming*, a person's destiny is still amenable to change.

The karma doctrine thus does not really involve a closed universe where human effort is of no avail to effect a change in destiny. Moral freedom is always allowed because a person's karma only determines where he is but does not predetermine how he will react in situations he may find himself. Furthermore, since a person's karma explains the karmic conditions he finds himself during this life, there is absolutely no accidentality, even though karma is immutably caused. Human effort is granted potency to struggle with even an unfavorable destiny.

As has been shown, a primary issue in early medieval Chinese thought and religious beliefs was: How is one to explain the myriad inequalities in terms of gratuitous fortune and unjustified misfortune, which plague many people's faith in moral conscience? The rejection of a predetermined fate in the karma doctrine presupposes a notion of individual responsibility. Man is then considered heir to his own deeds. The nature of his deeds determines whether he will have merits or demerits. There is no intervention of a judging heaven or psychophysical vital force loaded with ancestral merits or demerits. Karma thus assumes a personal character.

For people in early medieval China, the personal character of karma did not necessarily make the state of a person's personal existence intelligible to himself. Nonetheless, it did explain why he had been situated in a certain condition of life. Thus, the demand for justice and the demand for a causal explanation of events were fulfilled. To say the least, karma could serve as an explanatory fiction that provides therapeutic knowledge. With a belief in karma, people in early medieval China found an alternative to attributing their state of life to an inscrutable fate. In this way they found a reason for their moral effort

to remold their destiny. They had no reason to blame others, society, or the degeneration of human morality in accord with the metaphysical schema of time for their own misfortune. Most important, the karma doctrine opened an optimistic vista because it offered a sustainable belief in human ability to mold a person's destiny. As such, the doctrine affords an incentive for moral cultivation in this life, because moral effort will produce good karma in a future life. The karma doctrine affirms that life is not a game of dice. Everyone is held accountable for their own conduct. Furthermore, the doctrine provides a source of consolation for the present life because any unexpected misfortune could be attributed to a person's karmic deeds in his previous life.

As karma is defined personally in terms of an unfailing internal causal principle, karmic deeds do not necessitate an external judge to mete out fortune and misfortune in accord with acquired merits or demerits. Karma is an inner necessity. One Buddhist apologist in early medieval China defended the charge that the Buddha acted as the judge of people's conduct and doled out retribution. He argued that retribution attends conduct in the same way a shadow accompanies an object or an echo follows a sound. It is the mechanism of autogeneity (*ziran*), which has nothing to do with the Buddha.[110] More importantly, the karma doctrine can theoretically eliminate the role of heaven in determining the consequences of human behavior.[111]

The elimination of the role of heaven in the realm of human affairs had tremendous significance. As noted earlier, heaven had been the ultimate judge who presided over human justice. In the Han period, the unity of heaven and man was predicated on the theory of sympathetic resonance (*ganying* 感應).[112] According to the *ganying* theory, the human world and the humans therein are a miniature of the macrocosmic heaven. An event in the microcosmic world would cause a corresponding effect in heaven and vice versa; the relation of this kind of cause and effect is called *bao* 報[113] or *ying* 應.[114] It should be noted that *bao* and *ying* later were combined together to form the binome *baoying*, to be used in Buddhist literature to mean "retribution."[115] The cooptation of the indigenous term in the Buddhist doctrine of karma perhaps encapsulates most poetically the finale of the drama of hard destiny versus retribution in early medieval China.

Concluding Remarks

As the Han emperor fell short of being the universal king in the late Han, heaven, which sanctioned the emperor's mandate, was accordingly thrown into doubt as the patron authority for justice in the microcosmic

world of human mortals. The ultimate ground for human values was left vacant. The Celestial Masters, *xuanxue* thinkers as well as faithful Confucians, all scrambled to find a new philosophy to fill up this spiritual void. Beliefs in hard destiny, hopes in religious justice, and faith in moral deontology pulled in different directions yet often with complementary forces. The Buddhist doctrine of karma provided a counterpoise. Not only was it able to assimilate, albeit not necessarily by design, appealing merits in indigenous Chinese philosophical and religious resources, but it also introduced the idea of impersonal causation that was linked to individual responsibility. It functions as a principle of corresponding reaction, according to which a certain act will reap a corresponding result, in a way similar to the mutual response between corresponding categories in the *ganying* theory. Furthermore, the karma doctrine upholds morality without the intervention of heaven because karma is defined personally and karmic retribution has a mechanism of its own, independent of all interventions. Everyone is held responsible for their own deeds. As the *Dharmapada* says, no one can escape his own karma no matter where he goes.[116] In fact, the scripture explicitly discourages people to seek help from gods for blessings.[117] It was precisely on the basis of a personal karma that the Buddhists rejected the Confucian and religious Daoist beliefs in inherited retribution.[118] In the end, the karma doctrine proved to be a timely rescue to the potential fall of human morality since the late Han. If the karma doctrine can be respected as a formidable rival to the indigenous Chinese theories of destiny and retribution, for they often did compete for audience, then its popular acceptance in early medieval China perhaps may be considered evidence of, in Erik Zürcher's apt phrase, "the Buddhist conquest of China."

Notes

1. See David N. Keightley, "The Religious Commitment: Shang Theology and the Genesis of Chinese Political Culture," *History of Religions* 17, no. 3–4 (1978): 212.
2. Benjamin Schwartz, "The Chinese Perception of World Order, Past and Present," in *The Chinese World Order: Traditional Chinaís Foreign Relations*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 281.
3. For the details of Dong Zhongshu's political philosophy, see Kung-chuan Hsiao, *A History of Chinese Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 484–530.
4. Ban Gu 班固, *Han shu* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2002), 56.2518–19. See also n. 112.

5. For a discussion of how Dong Zhongshu persuaded Emperor Wu of Han to adopt the role of "sage-priest" and become the "ritual center of the realm," see Sarah A. Queen, *From Chronicle to Canon: The Hermeneutics of the Spring and Autumn, According to Tung Chung-shu* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996). For Dong Zhongshu's cosmological thinking on the role of the ruling sage, see Michael J. Puett, *To Become a God: Sacrifice, and Self-Divinization in Early China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002), 289–300.
6. Quoted from Ying-shih Yü, "Individualism and the Neo-Taoist Movement in Wei-Chin China," in *Individualism and Holism: Studies in Confucian and Taoist Values*, ed. Donald J. Munro (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1985), 122. See also Yü's discussion of the challenge posed to the late Han sovereignty on 121–55.
7. Fan Ye, *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1973), 71.2299. See also Qing Xitai 卿希泰, *Zhongguo daojiao shigang* 中國道教史綱 (Sichuan: Sichuan shehui kexue, 1980), 1:153–60; Paul Michaud, "The Yellow Turbans," *Monumenta Serica* 17 (1958): 47–127; and He Changqun 賀昌群, "Lun huangjin nongmin qiyi de kouhao" 論黃巾農民起義的口號 (Popular slogans during the peasant uprising of the Yellow Turbans), *Lishi yanjiu* 歷史研究, no.6 (1959): 33–40. For a concise discussion of the rebel ideology of the Yellow Turbans, see Vincent Y. C. Shih, "Some Chinese Rebel Ideologies" in *T'oung Pao* 64, no. 1–3 (1956): 163–70.
8. *Hou Han shu*, 68.2225.
9. Ibid., 79b.2589.
10. For the popular movements of early religious Daoism, see Barbara Hendrischke, "Early Daoist Movements," in *Daoism Handbook*, ed. Livia Kohn (Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 2000), 134–64.
11. For a discussion of the political ideology advocated in the TPJ, see Tang Yongtong 湯用彤, *Tang Yongtong xueshu lunwen ji* 湯用彤學術論文集 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1983), 52–79; Max Kaltenmark, "The Ideology of *Tai-p'ing Ching*," in *Facets of Taoism*, ed. Holmes Welch and Anna Seidel (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 21–33; Qing Xitai, *Zhongguo daojiao shigang*, 95–132; and Barbara Hendrischke, "The Concept of Inherited Evil in the *Taiping Jing*," *East Asian History* 2 (1991): 1–30.
12. Barbara Hendrischke, "The Concept of Inherited Evil in the *Taiping Jing*," 3.
13. *Han shu*, 75.3912.
14. The received text of the *Taiping jing* consists of multiple layers of different origins from different times, and its dating has been subject to academic debates. While dating of the TPJ corpus is difficult, if at all possible for indisputable certitude, I agree with Barbara Hendrischke that "it would seem to be over-cautious to avoid serious interpretation of an important scripture because its date has not yet been established. To do so may in

fact be self-defeating because it neglects the contribution which analytical interpretation of the content of a text can make towards its eventual dating and historical position." See her "The Concept of Inherited Evil in the *Taiping Jing*," 2. Like Hendrischke, I take the view that the core of the TPJ corpus originated from late Han China in the second century. One piece of evidence is that the term *chengfu* itself, as demonstrated earlier, actually evolved from various similar usages dating back to the earlier eras of the Former Han. This conceptual continuity is smoothly coherent within the context of Han intellectual history. For various discussions concerning the dating of the *Taiping jing*, see B. J. Mansvelt Beck, "The Date of the *Taiping Jing*," *T'oung Pao* 66, nos. 4 and 5 (1980): 149–82; J. O. Petersen, "The Early Traditions Relating to the Han Dynasty Transmission of the *Taiping Jing*," pt. 1, *Acta Orientalia* 50 (1989): 133–71, and pt. 2, *Acta Orientalia* 51 (1990): 133–216; and Barbara Kandel, *Taiping Jing: The Origin and Transmission of the "Scripture on General Welfare"—The History of an Unofficial Text*, Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens, vol. 75 (Hamburg, 1979).

15. Wang Ming 王明, ed., *Taiping jing hejiao* 太平經合校 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1985, rpt), 34.

16. For the Three-Antiquity schema and their respective moral condition, see TPJ, 46, 51–52, 61, 83, 84, 295, and 315. The *chengfu* retribution in Recent Antiquity is made clear on p. 124 where it says, "Everyone [in Recent Antiquity] has offended heaven and earth, and the retributory burden has been transmitted successively. Those who are born in a later epoch receive all the disasters upon their arrival [in this world]. And they could no longer receive any allotment from heaven. There is no hope [for them] to transcend [this world] (i.e., become an immortal) in their cycle of life and death" (人人有過於天地, 前後相承負, 後生者得并災到, 無復天命, 死生無期度也). In the *Xiang'er Commentary*, a religious Daoist text basically contemporaneous with the TPJ, the term *xiagu* is also mentioned. The *xiagu* epoch is also the age when Dao is on its decline and all human beings become morally perverse. See Rao Zongyi 饒宗頤, *Laozi Xiang'er zhu jiaojian* 老子想爾注校箋 (Hong Kong: Tong Nam, 1956), 50; cf. 24–25 where the late Han period seems to be alluded to as the *xiagu* epoch. Since the commentary survives in fragmentary form, it is difficult to determine whether it also entertains the Three-Antiquity schema of time as in the TPJ. Nevertheless, the idea of the cosmic Dao in progressive deterioration seems evident in most of the late Han religious Daoist texts known to us today. For a discussion of the cosmology in the *Xiang'er Commentary*, see Michael Puett, "Forming Spirits for the Way: The Cosmology of the *Xiang'er Commentary to the Laozi*," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 32 (2004): 1-27. The *xuanxue* thinker Guo Xiang seems to have held a similar idea of periodization of time. See Guo Qingfan 郭慶藩, *Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋, 2 vols. (Taipei: Shijie, 1971),

1:551–52, and 1:554. For the dating of the *Xiang'er Commentary*, see Rao Zongyi, *Xiang'er*, 1–5 and Chen Shixiang 陳世驤, "Xiang'er Laozi Daojing Dunhuang canjuan lunzheng" 想爾老子道經敦煌殘卷論證, *Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies*, New Series I, no.2 (April 1957): 42–45. Stephen R. Bokenkamp argues that the text was written before 215 CE; its authorship is unknowable, although some scholars attribute it to Zhang Lu 張魯. See his *Early Daoist Scriptures* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 31.

17. TPJ, 30.
18. Ibid., 33, 89.
19. Ibid., 60. The TPJ calls the way of life "*yi*" 一 (The "One"). It says, "The One is the way of life. The One is that from which the primal force originates." See also 392 and 410.
20. On top of moral deterioration, the natural resources in each epoch also reduce progressively. See ibid., 30.
21. For a brief discussion of the concept of *chengfu* in English, see Lien-sheng Yang, "The Concept of 'Pao' as A Basis for Social Relations in China," in *Chinese Thoughts and Institutions*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 299. More detailed discussions were offered by Chinese and Japanese scholars, see *Tang Yongtong xueshu lunwenji*, 28 and Ōfuchi Ninji 大淵忍爾, "Taihei kyō no shisō ni tsuite" 太平經の思想について, *Toyō Gakkuhō* 東洋學報, 28, no. 4 (1941): 152–55, and more recently, Barbara Hendrischke, "The Concept of Inherited Evil in the *Taiping Jing*," esp., 8–22. As Hendrischke convincingly argues, "there is no single concept of *chengfu* used consistently throughout the *Taiping* texts" (23); *chengfu* works on both the communal and personal levels and has a different emphasis in different textual layers in the TPJ corpus. However, my discussion of *chengfu* primarily serves to trace the historical trajectory of the various attempts in the corpus to justify moral practice and self-cultivation vis-à-vis the development of the beliefs in moral retribution and predestination in late Han China.
22. Yasui Kōzan 安居香山 and Nakamura Shōhachi 中村璋八, eds., *Isho shusei* 緯書集成, 3 vols. (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin, 1994), 1:464.
23. See Su Yu 蘇輿, *Chunqiu fanlu yizheng* 春秋繁露義證 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2002), 315.
24. For instance, see *Hou Han shu*, 33.1157 and 6.617.
25. TPJ, 70. This mechanism of *chengfu* works the same way on a metaphysical scale and in that context explains the successive deterioration of political governance since the incipiency of heaven and earth. See TPJ, 738.
26. The idea of inherited retribution may be traced back to the *Wenyan* 文言 commentary to the *Kun* 坤 hexagram in the *Yijing* 易經 (Book of Changes), where it says, "A household that has accumulated goodness is bound to have surplus goodness whereas a household that has accumulated evil is bound to have surplus evil" (積善之家, 必有餘慶。積不善之家, 必有

餘殃). For a discussion of the belief in inherited retribution before the proposal of the *chengfu* theory, see Yuet Keung Lo, "The Destiny of the *Shen* (Soul) and the Genesis of Early Medieval Confucian Metaphysics" (PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 1991), 29–39.

27. TPJ, 165.
28. Ibid., 321.
29. Barbara Hendrischke, "The Concept of Inherited Evil in the *Taiping Jing*," 29.
30. TPJ, 602. Cf. 625, 214, 531, and 546. The idea of *mingji* seems to have been shared by the *fangshi* 方士 diviners of Wei-Jin times; see Wang Shaoying 汪紹楹, annot., *Soushen ji* 搜神記 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1979), 33–34. A similar idea is also recurrent in early medieval Chinese Buddhist sutras, for but one example, see *Dizi sifusheng jing* 弟子死復生經, trans. Juqu Jingsheng 沮渠京聲 in the Liu-Song period (420–477), in Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡邊海旭, eds., *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經, 100 vols. (Tokyo: The Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1922–1934), vol.17, work 826, 869a6–7 (hereafter, *T*.17.826.869a6–7) where the Register of Destiny is called *minglu* 命錄 (Record of Destinies).
31. TPJ, 531.
32. Ibid., 567. The idea that destiny is predetermined at birth by stellar influence can also be found in early medieval religious Daoism. For instance, see Wang Ming 王明, *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi* 抱朴子内篇校釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1980), 205.
33. TPJ, 22. My translation is modified from Ying-shih Yü, "Views of Life and Death in the Late Han" (PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 1962), 111. However, Professor Yü did not discuss the *chengfu* theory on the cosmic level.
34. TPJ, 80.
35. Ibid., 22.
36. According to the TPJ, there is an administrative agency called *taiyin facao* 太陰法曹 (Juridical Court of Grand Yin) that is responsible for calculating a person's account of *chengfu* and determines the length of one's lifespan accordingly. See TPJ, 579.
37. Ibid., 576.
38. Ibid., 464 and 526. The same idea also appears in the *Xiang'er Commentary*. See Rao Zongyi, *Xiang'er*, 29. See also Rao's good discussion on 78.
39. TPJ, 139.
40. Ibid., 574.
41. For an excellent study of the *Xiang'er Commentary* with a translation, see Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, 29–148.
42. Rao Zongyi, *Xiang'er*, 41.
43. A fatalistic worldview was also reflected in the folk songs in the late Han.

For instance, in one *Yuefu* ballad titled "Wu sheng" 烏生, after giving several examples of unexpected tragedies, the poet concluded that "people each have their own [destined] lifespan, in matters of life and death, why bother to ask the whys and wherefores" (人民生各各有壽命, 死生何須復道前後). See Lu Qinli 逯欽立, *Xian-Qin Han Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi* 先秦漢魏晉南北朝詩, 3 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1983), 1:258–59.

44. Rao Zongyi, *Xiang'er*, 39 and 40. The *Taiping jing* also says "the Way of heaven cannot be strong-armed. Whoever attempts to strong-arm it will definitely die by bringing a battle upon himself and losing his authority" (天道不可彊劫, 劫必致兵喪威之死). See TPJ, 457.
45. Rao Zongyi, *Xiang'er*, 44.
46. Ibid., 45.
47. Yan Kejun 嚴可均, *Quan Han Wen*, in *Quan Shanggu Sandai Qin Han Sanguo Liuchao wen* 全上古三代秦漢三國六朝文, 10 vols. (Taipei: Shijie, 1963), 2: 23: 8b–10a. The idea that the accumulated merits of previous kings could bring fortune to their descendants goes back as early as the fourth century BCE
48. See Liu Zhiyuan 劉志遠 et al., *Sichuan Handai huaxiangzhuan yu Handai shehui* 四川漢代畫像磚與漢代社會 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1983), 131–36. Perhaps the late Han pragmatic concern with personal fortune was most graphically illustrated by the fact that human mortals could negotiate with spirits or gods in terms of particular reward even before they promised to do good deeds. In fact, oftentimes, gods and spirits and human mortals simply exchanged favors in their down-to-earth interaction. For example, in Gan Bao's 干寶 (286–336) *Soushen ji*, a woman afflicted with illness negotiated with a spirit. She promised to build a shrine for the spirit if the latter could heal her disease. Eventually the woman was healed, and she fulfilled her promise. On top of it, she even served as a shamaness in that shrine. In this example, reward even came before a promised "good" behavior. See Wang Shaoying, *Soushen ji*, 55. In another story, the protagonist broke his promise to a spirit who had helped him, and he was eventually killed by the spirit. See ibid., 120. Similar examples abound in Six Dynasties short stories; hence, it is reasonable to believe that the pragmatic concern with reward as an incentive for good behavior persisted in the early medieval period. For a full-length study of Queen Mother of the West, see Suzanne E. Cahill, *Transcendence and Divine Passion: The Queen Mother of the West in Medieval China* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1993).
49. See Rao Zongyi, *Xiang'er*, 24. Cf. 15, 22, and 25. A similar condemnation can also be found in the *Taiping jing*. See TPJ, 1. For a study on the "scam teachings," see Liu Zhaorui 劉昭瑞, "Lun *Laozi Xiang'er zhu* zhong de Huang Rong 'weiji' yu Tianshi dao 'heqi' shuo" (論《老子想爾注》中的黃、容"偽技"與天師道"合氣"說), *Daojia wenhua yanjiu* 道家文化研究 7 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1995), 284–93.
50. Rao Zongyi, *Xiang'er*, 29.

51. Ibid., 33. See also 8, 10, 17, 21, 22, 24, and 46. The exhortation not to commit the same mistake twice actually comes from *Analects* 6.3, where Confucius commended his beloved disciple Yan Hui for being able to do so.
52. TPJ, 534, 549, 551, 552, and 602. For instance, there is the Department of Destiny (*mingcao* 命曹) that determines the destinies of humans (562), and another called the Department of Lifespan (*shoucao* 壽曹) that takes charge of the length of humans' lifespan in accord with their behavior (546 and 551). Ying-shih Yü has a good discussion of this issue. See his "Views of Life and Death in the Late Han," 104–5.
53. Lu Qinli, *Xian-Qin Han Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi*, 1:187.
54. Rao Zongyi, *Xiang'er*, 8. See also 34, 36, 39, and 44.
55. For instance, filial piety is considered one of the most important virtues; see Rao Zongyi, *Xiang'er*, 8. For a list of other moral instructions in the *Xiang'er Commentary*, see Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, 49–50.
56. Mencius also talked about cultivation of the floodlike vital force that would render one capable of knowing one's mind to its fullest extent and thus communicating with heaven. See *Mencius*, 2A.2. The *Xiang'er* theory of refining one's vital force by accumulating merits in order to be in close contact with heaven was indeed a "vulgarized" version of Mencius's theory of moral cultivation that seeped through from the elite stratum to the popular stratum. The cross-stratum belief in cultivation of one's vital force and transgenerational retribution indicates that the need for a satisfactory (at least theoretically) account of personal fortune and misfortune was indeed urgent in the late Han.
57. Rao Zongyi, *Xiang'er*, 8. See also 17, 22, 30, 31, 33, and 47. Mencius also claimed that heaven would always be on the side of the virtuous. See *Mencius*, 4A.7.
58. TPJ, 41.
59. Zhao Qi, *Mengzi Zhao zhu* 孟子趙注 (Taipei: Zhonghua, 1970), *juan* 8, 7a.
60. Yasui Kōzan and Nakamura Shōhachi, *Isho shusei,* 1:25 and 1:27. Elsewhere in the same text Zheng Xuan said, "The virtue of the ruler embodying *qian* 乾 and *kun* 坤 is flourishing. Yet, the number of generations this virtue can be passed over to his descendants is no more than this (in the original text the number refers to thirty-two generations) because the number (*shu* 數) is exhausted." See ibid., 1:45–46.
61. TPJ, 22, 182. The TPJ also explains the transmission of the *chengfu* burden by attributing it to the circulation of vital forces of a pernicious nature (*haiqi* 害氣). See ibid., 522. Erik Zürcher demonstrates that the belief in intrafamily inheritance of moral retribution was common in early Daoism but the Daoist texts on which he bases his observation talk about a cycle of seven generations instead. See his "Buddhist Influence on Early Daoism," *T'oung Pao* 46 (1980): 137 (full essay, 84–147). That the

chengfu theory worked on a five-generation basis may suggest that the TPJ came from the late Han period.

62. For a detailed discussion of the theory of threefold destiny, see Ying-shih Yü, "View of Life and Death," 96–113.
63. Liu Pansui 劉盼遂, *Lunheng jijie* 論衡集解, 2 vols. (Taipei: Shijie, 1958), 1:25–26. Wang Chong's report of the three types of destiny in fact can be traced farther back to the Former Han in second century BCE See Su Yu, *Chunqiu fanlu yizheng*, 149–50. The threefold destiny apparently was also popular among the non-elite as it was recorded in *Xiaojing yuanshen qi* 孝經援神契, an auxiliary text on the *Classic of Filial Devotion*. See Yasui Kōzan and Nakamura Shōhachi, *Isho shusei*, 3:982 and 3:990–91. Conceptually, Michael Nylan distinguishes twelve different meanings of *ming* in the Han. See Michael Nylan trans., *The Elemental Changes: The Ancient Chinese Companion to the I Ching* (Albany: State University of New York, 1994). For a concise account of the idea of *ming* in the Han, see Lisa Raphals, "Languages of Fate: Semantic Fields in Chinese and Greek" in *The Magnitude of Ming: Command, Allotment, and Fate in Chinese Culture*, ed. Christopher Lupke (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 84–91.
64. While also entertaining the idea of a threefold destiny, Wang Chong himself dismissed the Confucian interpretations of them. He explained his own theory in terms of hard fatalism as follows: "Those who have natural destiny live one hundred years. Those who have merit-based destiny live fifty years. Accidental destiny refers to the evils one encounters when one receives one's vital force initially. This means one encounters misfortune at birth" (正命者至百而死。隨命者五十而死。遭命者, 初禀氣時遭凶惡也, 謂姙娠之時遭得惡也). See Liu Pansui, *Lunheng*, 1:27. It should be noted that Wang Chong also believed in a form of stellar fatalism. See ibid., 1:24.
65. The TPJ asserts that it is precisely by virtue of learning that a man can become a superior man. See 433.
66. Ge Hong 葛洪 (253?–333?), the Master Who Embraces Simplicity, inherited the *chengfu* theory, though he did not expressly call it as such. See Wang Ming, *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi*, 115.
67. Xu Xianglin 徐湘霖 annot., *Zhonglun jiaozhu* 中論校注 (Sichuan: Ba-Shu, 2000), 51. Xu wrote a whole chapter on the topic of premature death and longevity. It will become clear that this fact alone indicates that people then were deeply preoccupied with the question of retribution. See ibid., 205–21.
68. Ibid., 206.
69. Xiao Tong 蕭統 comp., *Wenxuan* 文選, 3 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1977), *juan* 53, 3:730–35. Firm believers can be found among the non-elite as well. There was a certain Zhang Chezi 張車子 who held the view that human life is accompanied by destiny. See Wang Ming, *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi,* 205. Zhang Chezi was also mentioned in Gan Bao's *Soushen*

ji. See Wang Shaoying, 123. Since Zhang was mentioned by Ge Hong and Gan Bao, he must have lived before the fourth century CE Based on the order of appearance of Zhang in the *Soushen ji* where the figures recorded seem to appear in a chronological order, Zhang probably lived in the late second or early third century.

70. Yan Kejun, *Quan Sanguo wen*, 3:75:2a.
71. For a translation of the *Taixian*, see Michael Nylan, *The Elemental Changes: The Ancient Chinese Companion to the I Ching*.
72. Shen Yue 沈約, *Song shu* 宋書 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1974), 66.1734. For a good discussion of the historical development of *xuanxue*, see He Qimin 何啓民, *Wei Jin sixiang yu tanfeng* 魏晉思想與談風 (Taipei: Xuesheng, 1967). See also "Wei Jin xuanxue taolunhui zongshu" 魏晉玄學討論會綜述, *Zhexue yanjiu* 哲學研究, no. 1 (1986): 79–80, and the discussion in the "Introduction" to this volume.
73. During the Six Dynasties, the *Laozi*, *Zhuangzi* and *Yijing* were grouped together under the name "*sanxuan*" 三玄 (Three Works on the Mysterious). See Xiao Zixian 蕭子顯, *Liang shu* 梁書, 3 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1973), 48.679. The term *sanxuan* was also known in northern China then, see Wang Liqi 王利器, *Yanshi jiaxun jijie* 顏氏家訓集解 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1980), 179.
74. For a detailed discussion of the idea of *ziran* in classical Daoism until Han times, see Richard L. Van Houten, "Nature and *Tzu-jan* in Early Chinese Philosophical Literature," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 15 (1988): 35–49.
75. Liu Pansui, *Lunheng*, 1:47. For a more detailed discussion of Wang Chong's idea of *ziran*, see Satō Kyōgen 佐藤匡玄, *Ronkō no kenkyū* 論衡の研究 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1981), 71–113 and 138–59.
76. For a full-scale study of Wang Bi's ontology, see Rudolf G. Wagner, *Language, Ontology, and Political Philosophy in China: Wang Bi's Scholarly Exploration of the Dark* (*Xuanxue*) (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 83–121.
77. Compare Rudolf G. Wagner's discussion of *ziran* as the basis of the order of things, in ibid., 109–11.
78. Lou Yulie 樓宇烈, *Wang Bi ji jiaoshi* 王弼集校釋, 2 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1980), 2:591 and 1:216.
79. Guo Qingfan, *Zhuangzi jishi*, 1:128.
80. In Guo Xiang's thinking, *zhi* 知 can also mean knowledge which refers to what one can know with the capacity of one's inborn nature. That a person acquires the kind of *zhi* by learning as he does is called "encounter" (*yu* 遇), which is a mere matter of accident or coincidence. Self-contentment is what he can achieve by simply abiding by his nature and embracing his encounter with the circumstances in which he finds himself. See ibid., 2:2768.
81. Brook Ziporyn argues that *ziran* means "equally necessity, freedom, and chance" to Guo Xiang and each of the three meanings always implies the

other two. See his *The Penumbra Unbound: The Neo-Taoist Philosophy of Guo Xiang* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 143–46 and 149–60.

82. As early as the late Han period, discussions of human abilities and personalities became popular among Chinese literati. These discussions, conducted in the form of conversation, were known as "pure conversation." They were politically significant because they involved evaluations of actual people, and could serve as a basis for selections of government officials. From the Wei-Jin period, however, the political character of pure conversation changed into a more philosophical one. The topics of pure conversation covered a wide spectrum of interests including nourishment of life, the relation between being and nonbeing, the nature of music and the problem of language and meaning, and so forth.
83. Yu Jiaxi 余嘉錫, *Shishuo xinyu jianshu* 世說新語箋疏 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1983), 231; Richard Mather, *Shih-shuo Hsin-yü*: *A New Account of Tales of the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), 116. It is no coincidence that in annotating this anecdote, Liu Xiaobiao 劉孝標 (462–521) appended Guo Xiang's commentary on the "Qiwulun" 齊物論 chapter of the *Zhuangzi*.
84. The hard and fast social stratification between the landholding aristocrats and the landless commoners in early medieval China could easily aggravate the sense of predestination across both sides of the social and political divide.
85. Wang Ming, *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi*, 205. Ge Hong also maintained that physical immortality can be learned regardless of one's destiny. See ibid., 99. Cf. n. 66. This inconsistency, more than likely, is another expression of the potential tension between fatalism and belief in retribution in early medieval China. For a more detailed discussion of fate in religious Daoism in medieval China, see Stephen R. Bokenkamp, "Simple Twists of Fate: The Daoist Body and Its *Ming*" in *The Magnitude of Ming*, ed. Christopher Lupke, 151–68.
86. Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, *Liezi jishi* 列子集釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1979), 191.
87. Ibid., 206.
88. Ibid., 212.
89. Ibid., 211.
90. Ibid., 216.
91. Yan Kejun, *Quan Jin wen*, in *Quan Shanggu Sandai Qin Han Sanguo Liuchao wen*, 4:83.3b. Xie's despondency over the transitoriness of life was shared by the famous calligrapher Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (321–379) and many of his close friends and associates. See my discussion of the famous social and ritual gathering at Orchid Pavilion (Lanting 蘭亭) in Lao Yueqiang 勞悅強, "Chuan liu bu she yu chuan liu bu xi: Cong Kongzi zhi tan dao Zhu Xi de quanshi" 川流不舍與川流不息: 從孔子之歎到朱熹

的詮釋, *Bulletin of the Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy* 中央研究院中國文哲研究集刊, Academia Sinica, 26 (2005): 266–73.

92. *Quan Jin wen*, 3:35.921.
93. Yan Kejun, *Quan Liang wen*, in *Quan Shanggu Sandai Qin Han Sanguo Liuchao wen*, 6:42:5a–8b.
94. It is interesting to note that there is a collective biography bearing the title "Zhizu" 知足 (Resting with Contentment) in the *Liang shu* and it is the only one of its kind among all Chinese official histories. See *Liang shu*, 52.757–63. This unique biography in the *Liang shu* seems to be consistent with the fatalistic worldview prevalent in the Liang dynasty.
95. *T.*17(790)735b.9–14 and 735c.2–3.
96. For a general discussion of the controversy revolving the karma doctrine in early medieval China, see Li Xiaorong 李小榮, *Hongming ji Guang Hongming ji shu lun gao* 《弘明集》《廣宏明集》述論稿 (Chengdu: Ba-Shu, 2005), 383–467.
97. For the arguments about the dating of the *Lihuo lun*, see Kamata Shigeo 鎌田茂雄, *Chūgoku Bukkyō shi* 中國仏教史 (Tokyo: Iwanami sh ten, 1978), 18, n. 3. See also John P. Keenan, *How Master Mou Removes Our Doubts: A Reader-Response Study and Translation of the Mou-Tzu Li-Huo Lun* (Albany: State University of New York, 1994). For the most recent view, see Li Xiaorong, *Hongming ji Guang Hongming ji shu lun gao*, 1–45, esp., 20–29, where he argues that the *Lihuo lun* could not have been written earlier than the end of the Han but no later than the middle of the Eastern Jin.
98. The view that he who attains the Way deserves to live in the abode of happiness can be found in Chen Hui's 陳慧 commentary from the third century on the *Yin chi ru jing* 陰持入經, probably the first Chinese commentary ever on a Buddhist scripture. Chen says, "It is admonished that [we] seek the Way, take delight in the heavenly blessings and vow to ascend to heaven so that we can lengthen our lifespan" (戒當以求道, 而樂天福, 願升天, 庶彼延壽). See *T.*33(1694)14b.7–8.
99. Sengyou 僧祐 (445–518), *Hongming ji* 弘明集, in *T.*52(2102)3b10–21.
100. This is a key term in religious Daoism, which literally means "transcend the world." The term refers to a physical as well as spiritual transcendence from this world to an other-world in religious Daoism. See also the citation of the TPJ in n. 16.
101. *T.*52(2102)3c27–4a13.
102. *T.*52(2102)8b22–25. It should be noted that in the Han dynasty, it was the duty of the prime minister to harmonize yin and yang in order to bring peace and stability to the state.
103. For the problem of the capriciousness of retribution in early medieval China, see Chen Ning 陳寧, "Han Wei Liuchao sixiangjie dui 'baoshi duo shuang' wenti de taolun" 漢魏六朝思想界對「報施多爽」問題的討論, in *Bulletin of the Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy* 中央研

究院中國文哲研究集刊, Academia Sinica, 13 (1998): 48–72. See also his "Han Jin shiqi sixiangjie de mingyun guan" 漢晉時期思想界的命運觀, in *Xin shixue* 新史學 8, no. 4 (1997): 1–34.

104. Lu Qinli, *Xian-Qin Han Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi*, 2:997.

105. *T.*52(2102)34b3-34c25. See also Chen Ning 陳寧, "Huiyuan 'Sanbao lun' zhong de xianbao lun jiexi" 慧遠《三報論》中的「現報論」解析, in *Zhongguo zhexueshi* 中國哲學史, 1997.2: 56–65.

106. The *Fo Bannihuan jing* 佛般泥洹經 (*Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*), translated by Bo Fazu 白法祖 in the Western Jin (265–316), speaks against the Chinese beliefs in transgenerational retribution. It says, "Good and evil accompany one's person. The son will not suffer misfortune for the father's wrongdoings. Neither will the father suffer misfortune for the son's wrongdoings. They each have their own *samsara*. Good and evil and their concomitant misfortune will follow each of their persons separately" (善惡隨身。父有過惡, 子不獲殃。子有過惡, 父不獲殃。各自生死, 善惡殃咎, 各隨其身). See *T.*1(5)169a26-28. Incidentally, the practice of merit transference was accepted in Theravada Buddhism, even though inconsistent with the earlier doctrines of karma. Theravada Buddhists attempted to argue against the transfer of merit on ethical rather than dogmatic grounds. For instance, see James P. McDermott, "Sādhīna Jātaka: A Case against the Transfer of Merit," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 94, no. 3 (1974): 385–87. With the rise of the theory of merit transference in Mahayana Buddhism based on the compassion of bodhisattvas, the Buddhist doctrine of karma became perfectly compatible with the indigenous Chinese belief in inherited retribution.

107. The karma doctrine does not connote a sense of accidentality, unlike Guo Xiang's idea of *ziran*.

108. *T.*2(125)786a.18–22.

109. Such a belief easily reminds us of Ge Hong's theory of predestined immortals. Ge Hong argued that whether one can become an immortal is predetermined when one is born out of the primal force. However, karma does not seem to have ever implied a notion of fate to the people in early medieval China. In the *Foshuo Bojing chao*, the Buddha in his previous life said that long life and short life, wealth and poverty, cleverness and stupidity and all kinds of physical deformities and diseases are the consequences of evil done in a previous life. The Buddha stated this fact to repudiate his opponents' disbelief in retribution as well as their belief in hard destiny. In this context, it is clear that karmic retribution was demonstrated as an opposing view to the belief in hard destiny. See *T.*17(790)735c.5–9.

110. See *T.*52(2102)8b8–10. This explanation easily reminds us of the passage in the *Foshuo Bojing chao* discussed above. It should be noted that the mechanism of *ziran* is also called *xuanying* 玄應 ("dark" response) here, a term typically used in *xuanxue* to refer to the merging of two

or more entities as their inner natures unfold spontaneously in their chance encounters. See, for instance, Guo Xiang's usage in Guo Qingfan, *Zhuangzi jishi*, 1:24 and 1:301.

111. In fact, even after the Buddhist theory of karmic retribution was assimilated into Chinese culture, the belief in heaven as a fair judge for human affairs persisted down until today. For a good discussion of the fusion of the belief in heaven as the judge doling out rewards and punishments and the Buddhist theory of karmic retribution in the Ming period, see Yün-hua Jan, "The Chinese Understanding and Assimilation of Karma Doctrine," in *Karma and Rebirth: Post Classical Developments*, ed. Ronald W. Neufeldt (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), 158–65.
112. According to Dong Zhongshu, in the human order where the kingly way (*wangdao* 王道) reigns (see Su Yu, *Chunqiu fanlu yizheng*, 100–32 and 328–33), everybody emulates the ruler who, as a sage, in turn emulates heaven (ibid., 14 and 31). When the kingly way reigns, all human institutions are modeled upon the prescriptions manifested by heaven, and the son of heaven is the vicegerent who receives the heavenly mandate to carry out the implementation of the prescriptions from heaven. These prescriptions are called the heavenly principle (*tianli* 天理) [ibid., 230, 285–86, and 458–61]. Through instituting the heavenly principle, heaven and man are united into one (ibid., 288 and 341). No affairs, major or minor, difficult or easy, can be accomplished if they are not performed in accordance with the way of heaven (ibid., 346). Heaven will make its intentions manifest through calamities and analomies (*zaiyi* 災異) when man (particularly the son of heaven) commits mistakes or transgressions (ibid., 259–61). By examining the calamities or analomies, man can understand what heaven intends to have him perform (ibid., 145–46, 155–56, and 396–99). The *Chunqiu* 春秋 (Annals of Spring and Autumn) was of paramount importance in Han Confucianism not only because it could help people to know the past and understand the future, but because its words, as it was believed, embodied the subtle meanings of heaven, which were otherwise difficult to decipher. For Dong Zhongshu and many people in the Han, there was nothing that was not included in the *Chunqiu* (ibid., 68).
113. Su Yu, *Chunqiu fanlu yizheng*, 260.
114. Ibid., 13.
115. Xu Gan talked about the retribution of human affairs and he used the compound *yingbao* 應報 to mean retribution. See Xu Xianglin, *Zhonglun jiaozhu*, 51. It is noteworthy that the term *baoying* already appeared three times in the *Taiping jing* (534, 576, 622), but it was used literally in the sense of reporting or responding, and in one case (576) the sense of retribution was connotative rather than denotative. Thus, it seems clear that *baoying* was not used as a technical term for retribution until it was adopted in the translation of Buddhist scriptures.

116. *T*.4(210)559b.6–7. The *Dharampada* was first translated into Chinese by Vighṇa 維祇難 and Zhu Lüyan 竺律炎 in the early decades of the third century in the Kingdom of Wu. See *T*.50(2059)326b.25–26.
117. Ibid., 575a.5–6.
118. *T*.52(2102)8a6-10. The term *tiancao* (celestial department), which appears in both the *Xiang'er Commentary* and the *Taiping jing*, is used in the Buddhist rebuttal. For a comparison of *chengfu* and the Buddhist doctrine of reincarnation, see Tang Yijie 湯一介, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shiqi de daojiao* 魏晉南北朝時期的道教 (Xi'an: Shanxi shifan daxue, 1988), 333–44.

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